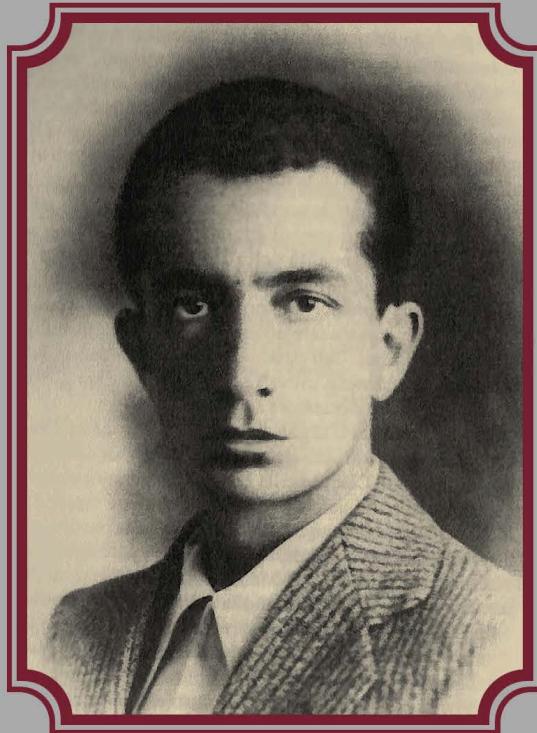


THE
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GROUP



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TRADITION

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Initiation and Tradition

Preface

These pages are intended to offer meditative guidance to those who, beyond any doctrinal preference, passion, or attachment—at a moment in human history whose gravity does not allow for lingering on illusory remedies—feel that Initiation as an absolute necessity. This writing is intended as an indication of such an experience—not a demonstration that would never prove anything. Its substance has been carefully crafted so as not to appeal to a “knowledge” that leaves life inert, but to the inner forces of the reader, which, if animated, can become the content to which the allusion has been made. It therefore requires careful reading that follows the path of thoughts without omission.

I

The Science of Spirit, through perception not mediated by simple “knowledge,” but “direct” and conscious, as in the times before the *Kali-yuga*, man could still perceive the Divine in his own nature and in external nature internally connected: the Divine animated man through the bodily organization, not yet densified, and could inspire visions in him. Man saw the Eternal rising from the blood and recognized in the progenitor the spiritual entity of his lineage: a degree of Initiation was precisely his rising to direct communion with this entity. In his physical being, man could find life-giving contact with those transcendent forces that in nature take on forms, like great cosmic symbols. *Surya*, the Sun, *Ushas*, the Dawn, *Aghni*, Fire, *Vata*, the Wind, *Soma* the drink of immortality, are in the Vedas the memory of a similar communion. Similarly, in the primordial Taoist tradition, it is remembered that *Khien-uyan*, the initial Cause of perfection, sustains in an identical point the life of man and the life of nature: thus good is conformity to the Law of Being, evil is non-conformity. Tradition will then be the memory of conformity when it begins to be lost. It will no longer be the “thing,” but the “memory” of the thing and the attempt to restore it through memory. The loss of the instinctive human-cosmic harmony will be the reason that can clarify the meaning of man's journey towards autonomous individuality and his relationship with Tradition. It is precisely a traditional fact that the fatal course towards the Kali-yuga must be contemplated in the context of an “involution” that is in accordance with the internal dynamics of the “Law.” This should be meditated upon with a sense of

responsibility by those who accept the doctrine of the Four Ages simply as a cultural phenomenon.

At the dawn of the new era, a change took place of which only a small group of Initiates had direct knowledge: humanity merely recorded the external consequences of this change as history, or suffered them as facts. From then on, the seeker of the Spirit could find the Divine only outside his own “nature,” in pure inner activity independent of the inclination to maintain conformity to a “direction” that had been exhausted, that is, in pure knowing no longer conditioned by physical-sensible being. Since then, returning to a spiritual tradition that was the echo of what was valid only for man inspired by the Divine through nature, blood, and lineage, became a mistake. Finding the Spirit by adhering solely to nature and to what now unconsciously arises from it has been the aspiration of a world that had passed away, of a world determined by a precise cyclical direction towards the Kali Yuga. In this “dark age,” the spiritual vitality of nature is now coming to an end, so that man may experience loneliness in the physical world.

The entire ancient world is valid in view of this extinction of the supersensible in the sensible, which occurs so that the ego may experience “individuation” and “freedom” and can then freely—not through fatal or mechanical compulsion—regain the lost divinity, precisely because it is also possible for him to lose it definitively. The alternative stands before man today as the possibility of annihilation or magical resurrection.

The secret traditions of the early centuries of our era speak veiled of a change of polarity: the Divine no longer arises, as in ancient times, from the corporeal or from the soul based on corporeal organization, but from that which can be freely

activated outside the corporeal. Those who wish to do so can find various echoes of this change in mythical elements, as well as in historical documents and data: a state of affairs which, not perceived in its essence, will be accepted as a normal condition, sufficient in itself, and such that it will be necessary to reconstruct the past and Tradition by means of cognitive forces that are the consequence of the loss of the capacity for vision that was at the basis of that past and that Tradition. Nor do the lovers of Tradition understand how fundamental it is to regain this capacity for vision, according to a technique that takes account of the current state of affairs and which therefore cannot be found in Tradition itself. But only the reconquest of the capacity for vision—which could not, however, be a repetition of what once was, but rather a new vision of what is, and therefore a new vision of what is possible—can account of the *síato of fact* and therefore cannot be found in Tradition itself. But only the reconquest of the capacity for vision—which cannot, however, be a repetition of what once was, but rather a conscious and free possession of it—can reestablish contact with the essence of mystery and myth : otherwise we inevitably move, with the being that we are, within a dead tradition, from which we seek metaphysical confirmation in order to remain what we are, since we subconsciously love to remain what we are, that is, wandering shadows on earth.

The echo of the human-cosmic crisis mentioned above can be found by anyone who wishes to do so, on the level of ordinary culture. It is a matter of realizing the actual meaning of a series of fateful expressions characteristic of the culture of the period to which reference is made: at a given moment, it is announced that *Pán o mégas téihneke*; there is talk of *Exleipsis tón chrestérión*. The 'divine child' who will establish the 'novus ordo' is awaited. The mission of the solar Logos on Earth is foretold by the

sanctuaries of India, Iran, and Chaldea, and in particular by the vision of the resurrected Osiris, called the 'Midnight Sun' in the Egyptian crypts. At the same time, the seals and initiatory signs change: ancient astrology ceases to be valid. The ancient systasis between the Divine and man is interrupted. And in the East, people begin to say: "The sam-pradàya is lost." Tradition can now only speak to solar Initiates—who are not at all visible on the stage of history—who know the conversion of its language according to the meaning of the invisible change.

The ancient world then came to an end: philosophy had just been born in the West, while in the East the word of Buddha was spreading and in the Far East Lao-tzu and Confucius had taught. Since then, the resurrection of the old world, the restoration of its traditional remnants, will unconsciously be a cadaverous operation, that is, a search for the supernatural in the degenerating inclinations that remain toward it as "types" or "ideas" of the subconscious detached from the super-natural. Where once supersensible entities manifested themselves directly in nature and in the race, the aforementioned change has now given way to the Ahrimanic forces of earthiness, while in the opposite polarity—against nature and the race—that is, in a direction that in past times would have been considered a transgression, an irregularity, nonconformity with the Dharma, precisely in this direction the Spirit is now active.

"The lights have been shifted." The attitude of referring to Tradition, the resurrection of the ancient connection with the Divine, will be a path toward the abstract, even if a psychic phenomenology and an esoteric transcendentalism, between romantic and imaginative, will give the illusion of a rediscovered initiatory heritage: a despiritualized imprint of a force that is no

longer there, just as it is no longer in the tomb—the ancient nature, the ancient world—the being of Christ. “He whom you seek is no longer here,” is said to those who ignore the resurrection and seek the Master in his earthly remains. Thus, the Spirit that one intends to rediscover is no longer in the remains of Tradition, but now flows in the unexpected, in what freedom potentially arising can create, in a direction that cannot be indicated by what already is.

Dogmatizing Tradition will inevitably be a hypnotic correlation with dark layers of pre-individual consciousness, which will exercise their power from below, inasmuch as they will not demand an independent movement, a creation outside the expected, an act of freedom, but will themselves tend to project themselves as transcendent values. And it is precisely such a projection, by valorizing in certain metaphysical or esoteric forms an underground world of shadows and memories, that will foster the climate in which, on the external plane, the materialistic sciences, as an analysis of inanimate nature—the earthly counterpart of the dead Tradition—will strengthen themselves, appearing as sciences of reality, and in particular analytical psychology will come to find the origin of every mythical event and every initiatory value in the images of the unconscious.

Now, despite the fact that the assertors of Tradition and contemporary psychoanalysts are in apparently opposite positions, in essence they both start from an identical inner condition. They both ignore the element of permanence that can now resurface—but may not—in the “new” conscious activity of man. This must be called “new” because it has no precedent in human history in terms of abstractness and individual limitation: it is, in fact, the necessary basis for the current consciousness of

the self. However, the fact that it is for now bound to the sensible, that is, that it thinks the world materialistically, and is stimulated only by the physical aspect of things, should not prevent us from recognizing in it the new, authentic spiritual element, which must simply free itself from the sensible support in order to be what it potentially is.

Having arisen thanks to the break with the ancient world and the initial independence from natural spontaneity, it therefore contains freedom as a possibility, both negative and affirmative: as the possibility of self-negation, but also as the possibility of affirming itself. Having arisen thanks to the break with the ancient world and its initial independence from natural spontaneity, it therefore contains freedom as both a negative and an affirmative possibility: as the possibility of self-negation, but also as the possibility of spiritual reintegration, requiring a new meditative path. These pages are intended to provide guidance towards that path. However, it is the only element that can constitute the starting point for real reintegration. The spirit thinks of the world “materialistically”: this is a mistake if one does not grasp its cosmic reason, for this thought is a force of the spirit that would otherwise not manifest itself, and within this process it must be regained.

The spontaneity of ancient nature therefore survives in different forms: as a dark impulse of religiosity, as a sub-personal mysticism that comes to clothe itself in the new and radically antithetical element of thought in order to revive, and thus can present itself as traditionalism or false spiritualism, or as dogmatic materialism: the subtle substance is identical. Thought, which is the 'new' element of the spirit, can be used to give dialectical or speculative justification to the complex of ancient impulses,

insofar as it ignores itself, does not perceive itself beyond its function as a 'cloak' for fictitious contents or inclinations rooted in ancient nature. In this sense, two opposing cosmic forces can act in concert in man: one operating through the support that is the formless mixture of instincts linked to Veiknos, the family, and race; the other through thought, in which the possibility of freedom is present. one operating through the support that is the formless mixture of instincts linked to Veiknos, to the family, to the race; the other through thought in which the possibility of freedom is present, diverting its liberating function, so that thought mistakes for freedom the unopposed affirmation of instincts rooted in ancient nature.

All this may explain why the Guide of the New Times teaches as one of the liberating techniques the "way of thought free from the senses," thanks to which thought can experience itself as a pre-dialectical force, independent of what in the sensible world prompts its process, which is inevitably a "reflection." The activity of thought, according to a particular discipline, can experience itself before the moment of reflection, thus achieving a clearer and broader degree of consciousness: this is the principle of the birth of the ego outside the conditions of ancient nature, which, only as a consequence of a possible "resurrection" of the inner principle that frees itself from it, can bring about what concerns it as nature. In this condition, traditional wisdom can be understood, the essence of the ancient Mysteries. resurrection" of the inner principle that frees itself from it, can it accomplish what concerns it as nature. In this condition, traditional wisdom can be understood, the essence of the ancient Mysteries can be contemplated, and the key to Yoga can be known again.

But the ancient nature is difficult to see, because one is not outside it; one is born into it, and one is initially thinking beings through it. The “newborn,” however, in order to grow, must free itself from the womb. The ancient nature, as the vehicle of the two opposing forces, tends to maintain its sovereignty over man, asserting itself as his reality and forcing him into a situation whose driving forces are desire and selfishness and whose corresponding limits are error and error.

The ancient nature should be contemplated: then it would reveal itself as the “body of memory” and as the “mirror of force”; none of its functions could be impure, because, as will be seen later, the ancient nature is the vehicle of the two opposing forces. The ancient nature should be contemplated: then it would reveal itself as the “body of memory” and as the “mirror of strength”; none of its functions could be impure, because, as will be seen later, the forces of contemplation are those that, bound to it—and binding—constitute and feed its error. This is why, as we said, in order to escape contradiction, the Initiate of the new age is given the discipline of “thought free from the senses.”

The darkness of nature and the manifold fragmentation of the sensible world can, in fact, assert themselves in consciousness as “necessities” and appear “real,” insofar as they rise to the dignity of thought content, without actually being so, since it is not thought that thinks them, but they that use thought, covering themselves with it, and the ego consequently undergoes them, deluding itself into believing that it is the subject of the various processes of the soul: an illusion that disappears whenever it is overwhelmed by the subtle or violent assertions of fallen nature. Because abstract thought has no force, it does not compel, whereas the thought of ancient man carried within itself a supra-

individual power capable of imposing itself on the whole being; modern thought is abstract, detached from the supra-individual, in that its function is individual, it cannot compel even with right judgments. It is normal for modern man to have the “right judgment” but not the strength to act “rightly.”

The function of abstract thought has been to posit the intellectual possibility of freedom solely as a logical process, which, if freedom is to be realized, must be followed by a dynamic or magical moment consisting in the intervention—brought about by free thought—of a higher force of a suprarational order capable of restoring to man the “vision of essences.” There was no other object for modern experience of thought and the collateral process of philosophy. The time has come to free ourselves from the illusion that modern culture is real in itself: it is the result of a provisional possibility of the human soul: that of abstract thought. The Science of Spirit shows how this provisional world of abstract dialectic, whose positivity consisted in being a possible prelude to conscious liberation, has already passed its positive moment and in this sense risks being the vehicle of the loss of freedom, inasmuch as it is not the autonomous ego, but nature that seizes the forces of will that cosmically correspond to the experience of conscious freedom. The logic that accompanied the emergence of abstract thought, being nothing more than the last echo of the ancient supersensible vision that came to man in the form of rationality, begins to cease to be logical.

Logic begins to be no longer possible, since, having appeared at a given moment in human history as the garment of an intuition of reality, now exhausted—a new garment for an ancient content, no longer accessible except in the rationalistic-abstract form—it should have fed on the intuitive content

possible through the conversion of abstract thought, that is, the aforementioned inner resurrection, in order to continue to be, at the level of the intellect, the interrelation necessary for human relationships. Since this new content did not materialize, and abstract thought limited itself to being the illusory activity of the intellect, beneath which the de-spiritualized nature emerged as the only vital reality, it is clear that we are moving towards an era in which humans are returning to being instinctive beings, increasingly instinctive, with no other direction than that of the abstract intellect, which can no longer do anything, while the possibility of understanding one another is lost due to the exhaustion of the logical spirit: whose counterpart is the spread of a refined, narcissistic, erudite, and systematic dialecticism that explains everything, deals with everything, spares neither heaven nor earth, neither mysteries nor myths nor traditions, and yet does not grasp an atom of reality.

The spiritualistic and esoteric-mystical currents have, in this sense, taken on the grave responsibility of diverting the attention of researchers from the element that plays at the center of this whole affair: thought. For every doctrinal assumption they make, they use thought: there is no statement they make that is not mediated by thought, and at the same time, they disown, despise, or ignore the “spiritual path” that is possible for thought. Certainly, not to abstract thought, which never ceases to be abstract and therefore inanimate even when it thinks about the universe, wisdom, God, or tradition. Only when thought, freeing itself from necessary and contingent content, and likewise from their abstract repercussions, can experience itself as content transparent to itself, to the point of becoming a creative force that, in order to exist, does not need to alienate itself in the supports of nature, which want only themselves—supports that

can likewise be of a sentient or mental order—only then can thought think the world and raise it back to its original dimension. Thought, where the conditions mentioned above are realized, can cease to be the passive mediation of things and sensations in consciousness—which in this sense are unreal—and become a limb of the ego, an autonomous element that activates itself as the objective inner connection of things and sensations. Not reducing itself to being their echo — an abstract repetition of a de-realized world — it will rise again as a force, or liberating knowledge, which will reconnect this darkened world with the original source it has lost: the appearances of forms and finite contents will thus finally have their meaning, being summarized in the supersensible uniqueness of their cosmic roots, their archetypes, which are the real foundation of the world. But thought will be able to do this only insofar as it achieves independence from the nature that now uses it: nature that can also emerge as a philosophical, mystical, or esoteric inclination and that can be expressed insofar as it is already clothed in abstract thought: because man does not know the point at which thought arises as freedom, as pure inner source.

II

On the threshold of the new age, the Initiates knew that the world is the creation of the Logos, that is, of the Son, as it is said at the beginning of the Gospel of John: they contemplated the world as the creation of the Logos, but they could already distinguish the permanent “created” as the imprint of the Divine that had worked in an original phase, from the spiritual Principle that joined with the substance of the manifested world to resurrect its inner life. This resurrection had resulted, for them, in the “shift of the lights.”

As the cycle of the Four Ages progressed toward the reversal of the cosmic polarities, a new path had to be opened to man toward the restoration of the ‘primordial state’ or immortality; but he could now only access this path through the power of self-awareness which, despite its expressive evidence and dialecticism, would present itself to those who wanted to know its essence as an ineffable initiative, inasmuch as it would be the possibility of a “creation from nothing,” having no model or predetermination behind it.

In the early Christian centuries, the Initiates were prepared to understand that, in order to attain communion with the Divine, they could no longer base themselves on the mystery of blood, nature, and tradition, because this mystery had exhausted its function: the Initiates had to know blood, nature, and tradition as supports for other forces, for other forces that were not yet known to them rely on the mystery of blood, nature, and tradition, because this mystery had exhausted its function: the Initiates had to know blood, nature, and tradition as supports of

other forces, of a “telluric” order. The lack of such knowledge could lead the spiritual seeker to serious errors.

And today, more than ever, this is the danger for every esotericist who relies on a supposed “traditional coherence” without practicing that self-knowledge that reveals to him the current invisible relationship between the forces of the spirit and the forces of nature: a relationship which, as we have seen, cannot be found in any traditional text, since it arose as a consequence of the extinction of the relationship between the human and the Divine, which was reflected in ancient times in Tradition. There are no longer any traditional organisms in the initiatory sense, and those that pass for such are systems of rituals that survive only in their external form: they are now vehicles of forces that have the task of binding man even more to earthiness, through the illusion of a liberation that can never happen, since man as he was cannot be contemplated, since there is no sense of man as he is. And only the exact knowledge of what is could make us understand the limit that must be overcome.

During the period of transition, the Initiates began to realize that they must now draw their inspiration from pure inner activity, from meditation independent of the rational-emotional soul, overcoming the temptation to rely on disciplines towards which there was already a predisposition imprinted in their constitution and of which a system of knowledge had been handed down from ancient times through a chain of transmission.

Every limit can be overcome when it is known: therefore, the Initiates attained a vision that was expressed in the following terms: “In the beginning, the earth was a spiritual body and was so powerful that it gave men the perception of the Divine: from

this perception, certain texts [the Vedas, the Brahmanas, the Upanishads, the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, etc.] were to spring forth, as residues of a wisdom that could no longer be retained through spiritual memory.” as remnants of a wisdom that could no longer be retained through spiritual memory, certain texts [the Vedas, the Brahmanas, the Upanishads, the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, the Yi-ching, the Bible, and others] in which, on the eve of the new era, some echoes of the lost Tradition are reflected. Now the earth is lifeless and therefore can no longer give anything to man: now it stands before men as nature, and man's thinking itself becomes an abstract garment of nature if it cannot recognize and realize itself in its essence as an entity independent of nature. Earthliness no longer gives anything: those who draw from it according to the motion conforming to the ancient relationship are seized by the gods of the underworld. Now we must reach, through individual inner strength, the Logos, which is the eternally creative essence of the world. Until now, the creative element has been venerated in the echo of the pre-earthly: now this echo has died away and the resonance of it cannot restore the original sound. Now we must rediscover what is invisibly creative behind the screen of the senses: it can only be grasped with the power of the ego, which finds its foundation in itself: it is the power that individualizes itself in sensory experience but which, precisely at this level, degrades and deforms itself. Man can escape from this contradiction thanks to a new knowledge of himself. The Rosicrucians are the bearers of this knowledge. The early Christians expressed this by proclaiming: “The end of the world is near.” They meant the end of that period in which knowledge came to man through bodily-soul mediation, that is, through inherited spontaneity, without requiring any inner effort of self-awareness. It was also

announced: “The kingdom of heaven is near, the kingdom of earth has passed away.” Now, the end of the old world has indeed come: for man, the Kingdom of Heaven has truly begun. It would be serious if he did not begin to realize this and continued to tie the activity of thought to sensory appearances, using it to legitimize the fictitious events of the external world, whereas the only true reason for the emergence of thought is the possibility of experiencing its essence in its pure state, since in this condition it can become an instrument of liberation. And it would be serious if man were to give himself, as a substitute for the new possible experience of the Spirit, the restoration of traditional contents, now detached from their source and inevitably connected with obscure states of bodily consciousness.

The problem for every researcher today is to distinguish the influences that, through bodily consciousness, push him toward any kind of self-affirmation, from the pure activity of the ego that experiences the supersensible insofar as it can dissolve at will from the subtle bonds of the physio-psychic organization. It is useless to say that modern psychology has no basis for grasping the meaning of this “bodily consciousness,” which is something that cannot be reduced to the discursive notions of the “subconscious.” modern psychology has no basis for grasping the meaning of this “bodily consciousness,” which is something that cannot be reduced to the discursive notions of “subconscious” and “unconscious,” and that the false assertion of self based on such consciousness, while recognizable in the contemporary type of man afflicted with a hysterical will to power and expressing itself in various “practical” fields, is difficult to discern when it takes on an aesthetic, esoteric, or mystical form.

The Christian mysticism of the Middle Ages, the series of great figures of the saints, are but the last echo of a resonance of the Divine through “feeling,” as a viaticum for man on the eve of new times, that is, for the era in which, alongside solitude in materiality, the new path of “thinking free from the senses” will be valid that goes beyond the atavistic memory of ancient initiations, beyond the remnants of a mysticism whose mystery can no longer be repeated. To presume to repeat it is nothing more than a Luciferian exercise, whereby one unknowingly submits to the element of death with which nature now weighs on the human soul.

The Earth today, as nature, is at the beginning of its decline. Natural science, and geology in particular, tell us that it has entered a phase of sterility and, in many respects, of involution. What is physical decays: the plant world, animal races, the human species draw their life from a thrust from the past: the Earth as a whole is devitalized compared to its original state: it is increasingly fragmented, pulverized. The most evolved humans are beginning to lose the efficiency of their sense organs. The Earth is moving towards darkness and death if humans do not ignite a new life outside abstract culture and the limits of mechanistic civilization, if humans continue to assume that life is a given and do not take responsibility for their own destiny is heading towards darkness and death if man does not ignite a new life outside of abstract culture and the limits of mechanistic civilization, if man continues to assume as life a state of death, an exteriority in which he wanders believing himself to be what he is, that is, the shadow of what he was in the beginning.

The Initiate of the new age teaches: “In the present, despite everything, the seed of the future already exists. What acts from

our past in contact with the spiritual world is present in our physical organism: this corresponds to the state of the vegetable and mineral nature that acts upon us. These are basically the results of a past existence and become present only because the Earth is enveloped by a spiritual-soul element, just as man is permeated by it insofar as he is active inwardly with his ego and soul. The mineral entity of the Earth does not allow soul and spirit to flow into itself, but only envelops them as if in a garment of light: even vegetation does not allow the soul to penetrate it [except at the moment of flowering]. In the life of the Earth, in the forms of crystals, in the peaks of mountains, in germinating and sprouting plants, we see the memories of the element that once created life, which is now dying. But in man himself, if we can distinguish this “dying” that radiates its energies from pre-earthly existence and comes to die in the vital and physical body, we can see the etheric-physical organism permeated by the light that the ego and the soul potentially radiate toward the future: a spiritual-creative element facing the future, which as a life of thought and representation, unfolds freely in man, resting for now on the equilibrium of nature's supports.

“In man, the past and the possibility of the future exist side by side. In nature, in its mineral and vegetable form, there is only the past: the element that works in man as the future already in the present is that which has the essence of freedom within itself. This essence is lacking in nature. From the invisible and supersensible element within him, man must expect reincarnation in a future earthly existence, nor can he expect it with regard to his physical and ethereal bodies, which are perishable: thus, the future of the Earth cannot derive from its mineral and vegetable kingdoms. Only if we are able to insert into the Earth something that it does not possess can a future Earth arise. Now, what does

not exist spontaneously on Earth are above all the active thoughts of man that can live and weave independently of his natural organism and his current conditions of equilibrium. If man brings forth these autonomous thoughts, he gives the Earth a future. But for this he must have these autonomous thoughts, because all the thoughts he forms on the perishable element of today's natural knowledge are reflected thoughts, not reality. When man abandons himself to these thoughts, he merely repeats the past, he lives in the corpses of the Divine; but if he enlivens his thoughts, he unites himself with his own spiritual essence, he brings about a new communion with the Divine that permeates the world and ensures its resurrection, which is his own resurrection.

III

As long as thought is an intellectual activity that limits itself to passively reflecting the sensible world—that is, the appearance of creation, of the past, of that which no longer has reality in itself—it presents itself in its weakened form and, as such, becomes the fabric of a culture, of an unreal science and conception of the world.

From an absolute point of view, thought, even though it originated as an activity stimulated by the sensible world, should not have limited itself to abstractly repeating the sensible: this was supposed to be a transitory condition. Yet from this transience there arose a culture that would like to be definitive by making perennial — look at the efforts for so-called 'progress' — the consequences of a precarious relationship between what is perishable in man and what appears to this perishable nature in the world. A symbol of this precarious relationship is the machine, an image of a lifeless cognitive process and, on the scale of organic values, inferior to minerals: instrumentally useful, no doubt, indeed necessary, but a symbol of a paralysis of the spirit, in that it is not recognized as the expression of a limit that will always prevent it, either through itself or through mechanical thought, from reaching what abstraction glimpses as the crowning achievement of an evolution along this line will always prevent us from reaching, through it or through mechanical thought, what abstraction allows us to glimpse as the crowning achievement of an evolution along this line.

Thought, it was said, should not be limited to the mediation of the sensible: such mediation was only the first moment of an

act—still partly produced, in its positive substance, by the ancient forces of spontaneity—that was not completed: which should have been completed insofar as thought could pass from the mediation of the sensible to the mediation of itself, perceiving itself independently of what prompted its self-perception. (This operation, although it must be expressed in almost philosophical terms, has nothing to do with philosophizing). Since this fulfillment did not occur, the ancient forces of nature, now deprived of even the last spiritual impetus that could express itself in the initial logical formulation of modern thought, tend to reassert themselves in man, taking on a new form of consciousness that even confers on them a state of aesthetic and scientific legitimacy. However, in essence, they are the forces of desire and anguish, of blind will to assert oneself and of fear, which are now increasingly invading human beings and urging them on under the anodyne guise of abstract thought, formally rich in theoretical antitheses and contrasts but qualitatively uniform, free only as discursiveness or as a reflection of the appearance of the world.

In abstract thought, man is effectively free from the ancient inspiration with which the Spirit guided him, abstractness does not constrain him, but at the same time he lacks the strength to implement the element of freedom: he can even formulate an autonomous judgment on things and at the same time lack the strength to act accordingly. Free thought, therefore, but lifeless and such that its reflexivity is continually used by nature, by that given temperament, by that given group of inclinations gathered under the sign of a discursive “I”: thought that lacks itself, that is, its inner law, and that only in view of the emergence of this inner law was it to arise in the sensible world, stimulated by sensory perception.

The task of thought was not to stop at the perceptual mediation of the external world, but this was to be its starting point, the stimulus to reach self-mediation: the only thing that can bring thinking back to the self and the self back to the spirit. Thought should have been realized as a force in itself, freeing itself from the sensible content to whose perception alone, however, it owed its expression in reflected form.

Experiencing itself on this side of the reflexivity that was nevertheless necessary for it, thought not only accomplishes something that is inherent in its spiritual nature and is in accordance with modern logic carried to its ultimate conclusion, but at the same time transcends the ancient canon of meditation: it realizes itself as cosmic vitality which, through free individual act, can restore the inner content to the sensible forms. These, as appearances, have no reality in themselves and in this sense are valid primarily as stimuli for the ordinary activation of thought: this activation, normally limited to the abstract imprint of things, can be carried beyond the abstract limit by conscious will, until it is revived by internal vitality, and it is this that can restore to sensible forms the inner reality that is their own and that was previously lost in abstraction. This points to a transcendence of the ancient canon of meditation, which was foreign to the possibility inherent in the experience of abstract thought.

The traditional initiate was inspired by living thoughts which, evoked in meditation, presented themselves to him from a supra-individual sphere and in a certain way compelled him to right vision and right action. The initiate of the new age can only start from dead thought, which, as such, is individual and does not compel: his meditation must be a work of resurrection that could not be contemplated in the Tradition, as it was not necessary.

This resurrection is therefore simultaneously individual and super-individual: it is in fact the possibility of thought to reconnect with the source of its strength, through the self-meditation mentioned above, and to reawaken as new life from sensory impressions the spiritual element active in them and unnoticed in abstract reflection.

It is clear from this how the meditation of the spiritual seeker of this time must start from a point opposite to that of the ancient initiate: the latter could act directly through his own physical-psychic constitution, leveraging his breath, the discipline of the heart, and ritual postures, taking the body as the basis of the *sadhana*. All this was normal then: today, resorting to such a discipline means binding the will even more to physiological conditions, multiplying the difficulties, ritual postures, and taking the body as the basis of the *sadhana*. All this was normal then; today, resorting to such discipline means binding the will even more to physiological conditions, multiplying the inner difficulties peculiar to the contemporary human type, and risking the loss of psychic equilibrium.

For the disciple of this time, it is essential to detach meditative activity from the breathing system, so that it can be left to itself, in its natural rest, while the *sadhana* is being performed. Normally, the breath is brought into the meditative process, but this prevents what is accomplished spiritually in meditation from then subtly—we would say inadvertently—altering the quality of the breath. This is a starting point opposite to the traditional one, something that is more difficult to accept and practice: not the external, but the internal; not nature, but what in a certain sense is opposed to nature; not psycho-physical discipline, but the discipline of what within reveals itself to be

independent of any psycho-physical influence: the act of thinking.

The abstract nature of thought is inevitable as a starting point, but also as a limit that can be overcome, certainly not through traditional methods that did not recognize this abstract nature, but through a conscious experience of it: for this experience implies the intervention of a higher force, which alone can transform being. It must be made increasingly clear that in rational thought the abstract—or negative—form of freedom is already possible: here the soul still is subject to the conditions of nature. But freedom can be translated into an active force if it is stimulated by the element of freedom inherent in abstract thought: this force is pure will flowing from the spirit in concentration, operating according to the canon of “thought free from the senses.” The will can lift thought from the level of its lifelessness and restore life to it: and this is also the path to the moral rebirth of man.

The method involves meditation that increasingly frees the inner principle from physical and psychological conditions, leaving nature intact, even when it seems that the results of meditation must affect it: nature must be freed from the conscious element, and the conscious element from nature. Only in this way does nature cease to be an obstacle and can, in its depth, spontaneously reconnect with its metaphysical basis, reconstituted thanks to active meditation as its opposite polarity.

On the other hand, for this resurrection—a solitary and unknown path which is therefore the condition for escaping the current confusion of values and for solving the problem of being and knowing—even those who glimpse its possibility or believe they are following the path of the Rosicrucians do not yet have

the "force of feeling" adequate for this, because human nature is accustomed to responding mystically to what stimulates it in the 'old' way, that is, according to atavistic and subconscious habits. Enthusiasm and the impetus of the soul are normally directed toward that to which they can react instinctively, that is, according to the nature that one already has.

This is the limit, but it is also a limit that is unknown, inasmuch as we are identified with it in various forms, even in those that postulate the spiritual. And we have seen that only the birth of an inner life independent of nature enables us to contemplate and rectify error and evil.

But we need to see clearly the relationship between spirit and nature. With "thought free from the senses," we can bring forth and give life to the soul that is normally identified with the physical body: in essence, the soul can reawaken to its essence if we work on certain faculties that manifest themselves in the world of the senses: used spiritually, these take on a completely different value. The force of egoism that arises and feeds on the sensible world must be dampened here, so that it can be reawakened, free from the body, when it experiences the spiritual. The physical world can be seen as the "place" where the egoism that was born in it can be overcome: there is no other place for such an overcoming. What is strength in the spiritual world becomes centripetal egoism in the physical world, but it is this same egoism which, removed from the dimension in which it arose, freed from the physio-psychic system, can become the power of individuality.

Where the sadhana is already well advanced, the ego's most intense affirmation in the outer world, albeit in apparently non-vulgar forms, is inevitable. As a consequence of internal

strengthening, the most aggressive forms of the ego resurface: instinctiveness reveals itself in all its force. But we must see in this a result of self-knowledge: something that was latent is revealed. At this point, the spiritual seeker can understand the meaning of the “annihilation of the ego” alluded to by mystics and traditional doctrines. But the task at this time is quite different: it is not a matter of annihilating the “ego,” but of increasingly strengthening that center of the self that can only form in the sensible world and therefore immediately manifest itself as a “lower ego”: but it is this very center which, without renouncing its strength, must simply shift it in another direction, recognizing the *instrumentality* or *non-finality*, of the sensible world and the futility of wanting something in that world with one's own tension.

The experience of the senses is in itself already a “deprivation” that cannot be overcome by the tension of the ego from which it springs. In essence, one is deprived of a sensible reality that feeds itself by opposing it to itself through false vision and reuniting with it through desire: but in this way it is never actually experienced, because it is not experienced by the ego, but by an alienation of the ego: from which arise only appearances, which in turn are necessary for the alienation of the ego.

That sensory experience can be something only for the spirit capable of having it without being corrupted or deformed by it, inasmuch as it finds and revives its original forces in it; but it will never be possible for the soul formed according to a blind adherence to pleasure or suffering: an adherence that ends up manipulating thought and even translating itself into terms of culture and morality.

The task is therefore to transpose the tension of the ego, not to let it grasp the world of appearances, but to change its object. Tension arises as an inferior phenomenon of the ego, but it can be transformed into a magical force if its object becomes spiritual, if it develops on a purely supersensible plane: here it ceases to be tension and rises again as a capacity to stand on a foundation that is no longer psycho-corporeal. It is clear that such a transposition is possible insofar as the ego no longer opposes sensory experience to itself, insofar as it finds within it its own inner life, which alone makes it possible: but this rediscovery of the spiritual element in the sensible takes the experience of the world beyond the mere sensory-intellectual phase: the external world, by virtue of another type of vision, ceases to exist as appearance. Appearance was true insofar as it was a trace of this spiritual element, assumed as exteriority in itself valid: once the spiritual element is rediscovered, the whole drama of the ego—of the culture of civilization and society—which feeds on the fact that this game of appearances gives rise to a struggle for life, an obsession with existence, which are ultimately a struggle for death and to confirm the deprivation of life, disappears.

Sensory experience does not stand before man so that he allows himself to be invaded by it through his organs of perception until his whole life is impregnated and manipulated by it — this is not, in essence, sensory experience, but the obscure response of the “body of desire,” the mixture of desire with the content of perceptions therefore never experienced in its concreteness — but only because man responds to it not with thought shaped by the senses but with thought free from the senses, so as to arrive at a new content of the world: that for which the process of death of the world and of man can be stopped.

Another content, therefore: no longer that resulting from the encounter of an abstract nature with reflective thinking, but that which arises from the reunion of two forces that are one in the Spiritual World and have become duality and opposition on earth because of the fall of the intellect into discursive and sentient paralysis. The two forces return to oneness within man insofar as he brings about their encounter by confronting the impressions of the world with “pure emptiness.” And “pure emptiness” can only be attained after the experience of “free thinking” from the senses: these are two moments mediated by pure meditation. This resurrects the perceptual contents of the world to a level where they are no longer fictitious elements that impregnate the soul with their fictitiousness and condition its continuous oscillation between pleasure and pain, craving and nausea, exaltation and depression, but are animated, reintegrated with their inner principle, forming the fabric of what must truly be known as reality. And this knowledge is liberating.

The Initiate of the new age teaches: “Evil penetrates life, guilt exists in the world, because man immerses his higher nature—not destined for Earth—in the ‘corporeal’ and develops in it, which in itself cannot be evil, faculties that belong not to it but to the spiritual.” Men can be evil—that is, aberrant, weak, exalted, instinctive—precisely because they can become pure beings of light and because, being potentially so, they must develop qualities that become ”evil” if used in the sensible life by the natural being, by the bearer of the temperament. The qualities that in the spiritual world are strength and purity in man, when inserted into the physical organization, become muddy sensuality, perfidy, envy, and dull pride. But man must be able to recognize the qualities that can lead him into error or make him evil, in

order to free the spiritual principle that has become alienated in them from their manifestation.

The immortal ego of man reasserts itself to the extent that the ordinary ego strengthens itself by internalizing itself, that is, by separating itself from its own nature while remaining close to it in external experience, recognizing in it the lifeless past, the dried-up memory of a world in which its inner life once expressed itself spontaneously. By continuing to identify with it, man remains bound to the earth, to a world of appearances, to shadows of remote revelations, or to a science that is the analysis of the corpse of ancient nature: in this sense, traditionalism, materialism, modern culture, and art are equivalent. They have their roots in a psychic activity dominated by obscure bodily influences of which we are unaware precisely because they can assert themselves through the psyche and the ego, which thus believe they are expressing themselves. From this we can see the need for a method that allows man to recognize himself in his principle, to be active where his distinction from the being of nature, from necessity, from the samsaric, prakritic element, is still possible. Such is the path of “thinking free from the senses,” which gives the ego the possibility of placing itself at the center of the life of the soul, in a creative relationship with nature from which it was previously unconsciously absorbed, even when it felt it could strongly assert itself. An unexpected point of view is possible, from which it can be seen what the titanic-hysterical self-assertion of contemporary man ultimately is. Modern art is the imaginative projection of this false self-assertion, just as esoteric traditionalism is its metaphysical projection: it is the dead past active through the nature that is.

Tradition, seen as a world in itself with its own laws that exclude any spiritual act not provided for by them, is analogous to nature that naturalists regard as a spectacle before them, necessary in its “objectivity,” without realizing that this spectacle exists not insofar as one is a spectator, but insofar as one is *active* in it. Without the cohesive intervention of representations and concepts, this spectacle would present itself as a chaos of meaningless perceptions. Thus, to believe that there is a Tradition that stands before man as a “thing,” outside of which one can be or according to whose “regularity” one can be, is to naively confuse an object or a pretext for spiritual activity with the spirit itself. In the ability to meditate on certain ancient symbols, an activity of the spirit can indeed be expressed; but ultimately, anyone who truly wants to find Tradition should not seek it outside the meditative thought that contemplates it, but could, for the same purpose, contemplate any other theme. Those who are not hypnotized by a Tradition subconsciously projected into time insofar as it is opposed to “modern times,” and which is now nothing outside the individual act of cognition, know that man cannot go back through illusory restorations: they know that man is such as he is because he is a nascent being—this is his freedom—and that he cannot cease to be born until he becomes the One from whom he was born. Therefore, for him to tend toward the traditionally or mystically reflected image of the One from whom he was born is truly “counter-initiation.”

IV

What has been said can be taken as a guideline for recognizing in the “past” understood in the abstract, in nature as it is conceived today, in “tradition” that is dead and illusorily resurrected, the legacy that is present in every plane of being as a world of necessity, that is, as the opposite pole to the possibility in view of which the whole history of man has unfolded: freedom.

Those who look with enlightened eyes recognize in the world of necessity—physical or psychic—in the past and in nature, that which makes evil, illness, and death inevitable. It is this that, being mistaken for life, insofar as it constitutes the basis of ordinary existence, brings the essence of life into radical contradiction with being, now passively accepted and even scientifically organized, but each time reemerging in its tragedy through that measure of reality which is pain and death.

This contradiction, having collectively reached its limit for the second time in the current century, will find its resolution in the coming decades when the third test presents itself: which has virtually begun and now weighs heavily on each human being, as a secret anguish, as a secret fear, as a sense of futility and powerlessness. The present hour is grave: this is not a rhetorical expression. on each human being, as secret anguish, as secret fear, as a sense of futility and powerlessness. *The present hour is grave:* this is not a rhetorical expression. Those who know how things really stand know that those few who have any inner responsibility should not waste another minute, should not delay their decision for a moment longer regarding those changes

which they secretly know must be made. Tasks of this kind can no longer be postponed. It is necessary to calmly and decisively realize the same strength that was possible to summon at certain decisive moments when, with the collapse of all human resistance, it seemed that the foundations of life were about to crumble.

We are on the eve of events that could be seriously destructive for humanity or prelude a rebirth in the sign of the Spirit. Those who have been the guardians of primordial wisdom until our time have the mission of teaching those who turn to them with purity of heart how the Higher Self, the Eternal Principle of man, which has remained intact in its essence beyond all space-time becoming, has been reborn for man thanks to a rite and a mystery of which only a faint and distorted echo remains in the world. The Masters of Initiation have been able to communicate this in the following terms: "That which has newly been born in humanity, the mystery of the Higher Self, is guarded by a secret community. The continuity of the Mystery that once again approaches the soul of man where it can find its innermost principle, which cannot be reduced to nature, is expressed by a symbol: the Cup used by Christ on the evening of the Last Supper, in which drops of His blood were then collected by Joseph of Arimathea."

According to legend, the sacred Cup was brought by the Angels to the West, where a temple was erected for it, and the brothers of the Rosicrucians became guardians of its contents, that is, guardians of the Holy Grail. According to legend, the sacred Cup was brought by the Angels to the West, where a temple was erected for it, and the brothers of the Rosicrucians became guardians of its contents, that is, guardians of the essence

of God who, by conquering death, brings about the new birth of the Self. The Mystery of the newly born God, beyond the dominion of death, awaits, unknown, the man who knows how to free himself from the spell of external existence. This is the Mystery of the Holy Grail, which stands as the present path of Initiation. The evangelist John was able to say: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” And he was able to announce that “the Word became flesh.” However, what this means cannot be found through any written or spoken word, but only through a radical relationship with what really happened as a cosmic event with the Sacrifice of Golgotha, which is only reflected in the Gospels.

The Way of Christ begins when the “inner word” falls silent, when there are no longer any languages capable of expressing the experience of the sacred: therefore, no language can yet give meaning to this Way. Only a supersensible knowledge, independent of the lifeless echo of ancient initiations—which were simply increasingly weak restorations of an enlightenment that was being lost and is now definitively lost in both the East and the West — and brought to men by one of the guardians of primordial Wisdom, can give us a glimpse of the direction towards this Way. He has truly shown it. And this synthesis of ours derives from his teaching, to which we can refer the reader who wishes to draw from the direct source

This Master teaches that “He who was in the beginning with God” was born again into Being and, by overcoming death, imprinted the power of Resurrection in the secret of the mineral substance of physical man. Now the task of the initiate is to bring forth within himself, through the vehicle of liberated thinking, the inner principle, independent of nature and the earth, through

which alone one can reconnect with one's Master: the principle of integral individuality, which can therefore accomplish the *Operatio Solis*. It can visit *interior lands* and arouse the adamantine virtue, the power that resolves the minerality of the "black stone." It is the Way of the Diamond-Lightning or the Way of the Holy Grail.

Those who have been able to know the continuity of the Logos in its human birth—the true content of the sanatana dharma—know that what "was in the beginning" has been secretly preserved on this side of the cyclical course toward the Kali Yuga, until the new times were ripe. In the beginning was the Mystery of the Higher Self of man: it remained as the secret of the "shining stone" lost first by Lucifer and then again by Adam. Therefore, the Mystery of the imperishable Self of man is kept in the Rock of the Grail. Those who are able to contemplate this Mystery know that in order to reach the spiritual center of the world, they must face the enigma of the crucial experience that seals the secret of the transmutation of evil and death, through the decisive "question" that the ego poses to its essence, they must face the enigma of the crucial experience that seals the secret of the transmutation of evil and death, through the decisive "question" that the ego poses to its perennial essence, already affirming itself in this as an emergence of the higher ego itself.

The ego that can rise again in every human soul reveals in this resurrection an essential connection with the birth of the Divine Ego in the cosmic being of humanity: in every human being there can arise, as the culmination of individuality—whose process should therefore not be dampened according to the interpretation of certain Eastern and Western mysticism, but lived to its

absolute conclusion—the Higher Self, just as the Higher Self of humanity was born.

The quest for the Grail is more than ever before before the decision of man, for his being or for his non-being: the enigma of the Grail is relevant and is the possibility of liberation in the future. The question of the Grail must be posed by the initiate, by the seeker of that spiritual center for which alone the appearances and errors of the world dissolve. The way of the Grail is still unknown today, but it can be found if attachment to earthly appearances and all their spiritualistic and traditional doctrinal projections has not completely extinguished the impulse toward the imperishable, the love of the infinite, and the will to liberation.

Techniques of Inner Concentration

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The Unknown Identity

Man knows and in some way dominates the world through thought. The contradiction is that he neither knows nor dominates thought. Thought remains a mystery to itself. Philosophy and psychology draw nourishment from it, but since their inception, they have not shown that they have grasped the meaning of its movement, the ultimate content of the logical process, which they use for their dialectical structures. They believe that thought is dialectics, that it coincides with dialectics: that it begins and ends as dialectics.

For the purposes of knowledge, external objectivity arises as a system of values in human consciousness, but the latter is unaware of establishing the foundation of the former and of determining objectivity as a concept, prior to the dialectical awareness of the concept itself.

Logically, man knows what a concept is, but he is unaware of what it is as a force, how it arises, and what its power of fulfillment in reality is: that it is more than its dialectical and logical appearance: the very power of Life.

Even if Materialism did not exist as the metaphysics of the present time, the materialistic attitude, as the inability of thought to know itself, could not but be the measure of the present consciousness: which, through knowledge, decrees the external world to be real, and yet believes it to exist outside of knowledge, whereas it is the world that arises from the presence of the I in perception and from the simultaneous correlation with thought.

One of the first experiences of the supersensible reveals that if the ego did not express itself physically, to the point of “touching” the physical through the sense organs, there would be no perception or consciousness of the ego: perception would present itself as in animals, as an impersonal, transcendent, sentient reaction proper to a group ego, *not as a reaction of an* individual, immanent ego. The individual, as the presence of the ego in perception, is the secret of thought, but also of the overcoming of human-animal nature.

The physical world stands before the observer as a massive reality: a reality that indeed appears to pre-exist observation, research, and the person who contemplates it. It appears powerful as being, but with a power that is actually conferred on it by the intimate essence of consciousness, where thought is a force of correlation and, as such, one with the essence of the world. “Being is,” is the assent of alienated thought, which simultaneously assumes and leaves dominant that reality: symbol of a dominion not possessed, indeed lost, by the ego.

Of course, it cannot pass through a wall or walk without resting on the ground: however, this material pre-existence and its massive otherness are the correlation due to the fact that it is inserted into a corporeality not dominated by original thought: a corporeality constituted of the same substance as massive otherness, giving rise to the concept of correlation: but the alienated concept. Matter indeed arises as objective reality as a consequence of an alienation of the Spirit: but it is secretly dominated by the Spirit. Such domination and alienation coexist equally in the human mind. If the original force were at work in thought, the body would not constitute otherness to thought: it would be its manifestation. Identity, which is realized in the

original moment of thought, would be realized, with its unlimited power, at every level of consciousness, that is, at every level of “manifestation.”

The concept alienated from its original content, and thus losing the identity that overcomes duality, cannot but have as its opposite its own bodily support, symbol of alienation, and yet necessary for the initial overcoming of alienation: it cannot conceive of crossing the wall with such a corporeal being or of not resting on the earth in order to walk on it: it can imagine it, but only as something unreal. And yet in this imagining lies the embryonic beginning of the overcoming of duality.

The correlation with the massive reality of the world would change if the concept of correlation ceased to be alienated: the observer could not cross physical matter, the wall, or the rock with his body, but he would intuit the possibility of doing so in relation to a restorable original power of Thought. The current correlation, as a concept, is not imposed on him by the world, but unfolds only within him: it does not come to him from outside, moving toward him from being, but moves from him. The being that appears to him is already the correlation in action.

All the effort of ancient Yoga consisted in grasping correlation as a supermental force. Modern rational man has it immanent but not conscious in his mathematical experience of the physical world. Correlation unfolds within him, according to an inner construction of the world, marked by the limits of the “laws of nature,” which are not nature, but precisely the correlation of alienated thought with the world. The limits appear on the outside, but they belong to thought correlated with perception: they belong to a relationship between thought and thought alienated from its own intuitive moment. This is the original

moment in which an identity with being is realized, which the modern investigator, despite his empiricism, does not seem to perceive. It is the identity without which otherness could not exist.

The conscious conquest of this identity is the ultimate meaning of man's earthly experience, inasmuch as, once the consciousness of earthiness is realized, the direction of the "fall" can cease and the ascent can begin. Ancient yoga secretly prepared this possibility: that it can be realized by man who has reached the stage of complete identification with the physical, that is, by modern man, whose self-consciousness awakens where the identity of the ego with the sensible is complete. In this identity, from which perception and thought arise, the ego expresses itself: from it, the *ego*, the reflected force of the ego opposed to the Spirit, is simultaneously born. The same identity is simultaneously the profound, organic act of the ego through corporeality and the force of the ego unaware of its own metaphysical root.

The modern ascetic must go to the root of this identity if he wants to rediscover the *ego*: to be the *ego* whose name he continually pronounces.

Concentration

Of the three faculties, thinking, feeling, and willing, which modern man has only reflected from the physical, only one can be traced back to its metaphysical root: thinking. Feeling and willing, when traced back, lead him back to a physical root, not because their essence is not metaphysical, but because it is excluded from their resonance in the soul according to the bond of the thinking consciousness to physical corporeality. The bondage of the soul to cerebrality, and therefore to physical corporeality, concerns thought, not feeling or will, which simply suffer the consequences of this necessity of thought: the “fall” of thought into cerebrality, necessary for the formation of individual consciousness and the lower process of freedom.

Thought can retrace its own process: in doing so, it accomplishes its own authentic movement, pure movement, independent of cerebrality: it restores to feeling and will their respective legitimate metaphysical connections. In the supramental sphere, thinking, feeling, and willing constitute a unity, normally lost in the mental sphere. Through the conversion of thought, this unity is restored.

Thought regains the power of self-movement when it is concentrated on a simple, easily controllable theme. It is not the theme that matters, but the thought engaged in it: which is always the same thought, whether it thinks of a chair or the Apocalypse. Initially, the theme must be a man-made object or a mathematical concept, because the impersonal thought underlying it, when relieved, has the power to free the conscious principle from the subjective psyche, which is bound to

corporeality: it guarantees that there will be no deviation into the unconscious, the mediumistic, or the mystical. This thought is the concept, independent of the object itself. The *concept*, reconstructed, becomes, at the end of the exercise, an object of contemplation.

- *Concentration. The disciple concentrates on an object, considering its form, substance, color, use, etc., the series of representations that exhaust its physical structure, until only the content of thought remains in its place. This operation should not engage the disciple's conscious attention for less than five minutes: at the end of it, the object must be before his consciousness as a symbol, or a sign, or a synthesis, having within itself, indialecticall, all the content of the thought elaborated.*

This is the typical exercise of concentration, the process of which, requiring the cooperation—even if only momentary—of the constituent principles of man, the ego, the soul, the subtle body, and the physical body, according to their original hierarchy, is fundamental for the modern experimenter. As a typical exercise, it is complete and can, if rigorously practiced, lead to real inner balance and subsequently to supernormal experience.

The importance of this exercise lies in its simplicity, which allows for maximum intensity of conscious thought. The material called upon for its construction—representations, memories, notions, discursive form, etc.—is not the thought force itself, but that which the thought force normally clothes itself in to express itself, without ever allowing itself to be grasped. The exercise tends to bring this elusive force to the surface of consciousness. — is not the thought-force, but that which normally clothes itself in order to express itself, without ever allowing itself to be

grasped. The exercise tends to bring this elusive thought-force to the surface of consciousness.

One brings the object into oneself, considering it in itself, according to the determinations it contains, correlated with the unity that thought already possesses in itself and can therefore reconstruct. Those who believe they are performing a more aristocratic exercise by thinking of a sacred symbol, or a *deva*, or a *mantra*, or a “mystery,” do not realize that they are not escaping their own personal nature, inasmuch as they are already bound by their subconscious feelings to the theme evoked: whereas he can become truly independent of nature when he moves with thoughts not imposed by it, but by the impersonal objectivity of the theme.

* * *

Considering that there is no object constructed by man that is not originally a thought, the disciple cultivates the idea that, in the sphere of earthly appearance, the invisible continually becomes visible. This idea is the principle of overcoming appearance. Every object constructed by man refers to a moment when it did not exist, but was only thought: this thought was then translated into tangible reality. The invisible became visible.

There is no human production or creation that does not refer to a moment of non-existence, that is, to its original void, in which the idea can be found. No one, looking at a machine or a building, thinks that they made themselves. But it happened that primitive people, upon first contact with objects or devices of machine civilization, believed them to be marvelous productions of nature: not as if those objects had made themselves, but as if they belonged to the creative process of the universe. Anyone

who, looking at a compass, thought that it made itself would be considered mentally deficient. However, despite their analytical logic, naive rationalists today behave no differently with regard to created nature: no better than primitive people faced with the unknown world of machines.

If there is no object produced by man that does not refer to a conscious thought capable of conceiving and realizing it, then we can argue how the invisible becomes visible: that which has not been produced by man and yet expresses a creative power refers to a Thought that man is not capable of thinking, at least in the present time. The asceticism of thought has precisely the task of awakening in the soul the capacity for such a Thought.

Concrete logic cannot fail to see the naive position of those who think that a perfect organ such as the human ear, or the tree, or the silkworm, made itself. It must be discovered that, just as the clock refers to the thought that determinedly conceived and technically produced it, so that this thought can be reconstructed by penetrating the structure of the clock, in the same way the seed of a plant refers to a thought that man is capable of imagining, but not of possessing as a structural process. He does not possess this structural process, as he possesses that of the clock. His thought lacks the ability to identify the force that functions in the plant as an ordering, archetypal process of mineral substances. While he can reproduce this archetypal process of thought with regard to the clock, he cannot do so with the plant. Even if all the most talented scientists on Earth were to put their heads together, they would not be able to reproduce a blade of grass.

Man can only work on what he perceives: whose perception he can translate into terms of thought: by means of which he can

reproduce what he perceives. Of the four kingdoms of nature, mineral, vegetable, animal, and human, he actually perceives only the mineral: the substantial forces of the other three kingdoms escape him. These use, according to different elaborations, the mineral element to construct their own sensible form: the vital force of the plant, the vital-sensing force of the animal, and the vital-sensing-mental force of man. Of the plant, the animal, and man, he perceives only the mineral appearance, elaborated to different degrees.

In essence, man imagines the world as animated or living, but he does not perceive it. He perceives only the mineral, the inanimate: therefore, he can build nothing but inanimate mechanisms: he can build a planetary missile, but he cannot reproduce the seed of a plant. His production stops at the inorganic sensory limit, because his perception does not go beyond that limit. He supposes life in every living entity, but he does not perceive it: he perceives the sensible manifestations of life at the mineral level, but not the causative element, which is insensible and operates through the mineral substance. Of the kingdoms of nature, man sees only the mineral appearance, not the forces that use minerality to build those kingdoms specifically.

Using the means of chemistry and physics, the modern scientist can even reproduce the seed of a plant exactly, forming it with all the substances that make up the authentic seed, to the point of achieving material and formal identity. He can have the two seeds before him, the authentic one and the chemically reproduced one, without being able to distinguish one from the other. The difference will become apparent when he plants the two seeds in the ground: the artificial seed will decompose, while the authentic one will give rise to new life.

Just as a clock did not make itself, so the seed that generates new life did not make itself: it too appears as a realized thought, but one whose realization does not stop at its sensible appearance, inasmuch as it is not identified with the form in which it appears, like the clock or any other object constructed by man, but continues in the process from which it arises and through which the birth of new life is possible.

Normally, the flowing process of life in plants is thought, conceived, or imagined by humans, but not perceived. They can perceive the sensible effects of the process of life, which is not sensible in itself, and on the basis of these effects conceive of this process. Just as the perceptible data of the clock can lead to the concept of the clock, so the perceptible phenomenology of the seed can lead to the idea of Life: but while in the first case his knowledge is faced with an identity of concept and object, which he can possess, so that he can reproduce the clock by means of it, in the second case he is faced with an idea that does indeed originate from him, but which has a core that refers to an imperceptible transcendence. However, it is up to him to discover that, insofar as it is in the idea, it is immanent.

Concentration realizes this immanence. The materialist ignores the transcendence of the immanent core of the idea of Life, in that he identifies the process of Life with the process of Matter, but provides the latter with the same ideal foundation: unconsciously falling into the naive realism of someone who, seeing a clock for the first time, thinks that it made itself. The idealist, on the other hand, believes in a spiritual process of Matter, but believes he possesses it only because he thinks it: he does not realize that he is thinking the core of the idea reflexively. He does not intuit a decisive task, from an empirical and

idealistic point of view, that would change the course of his life, making him make the transition from inert philosophizing to inner, or ascetic, action: experiencing what, immanent in the idea, is the transcendent core of thought: intuitable as the organizing force of the Life of the living, in the same way that the concept of the physical object is intuitable as its abstract principle.

Latent Forces of Thought

The exercise of concentration allows us to ascend from the object to the concept. This exercise can be said to be complete when the concept itself can become the object of concentration. Concentration becomes thinking contemplation of the concept, reconstituted on the basis of the object. The thought that previously thought the object becomes the object itself: it takes the place of the object. Thinking concentration, or contemplation, can in this sense reach the intensity proper to sensory perception.

Sensory perception is essentially an intense synthesis of thought that resonates from the external world into the soul through the senses, the structure of which belongs more to the sensible sphere than to that of the soul. The experimenter of the extrasensible comes to have the perception of the concept. The concept, taken as an object and thus perceived, implies an exceptionally autonomous activity of thought: the embodiment of an essence which, compared to ordinary thought, is unconscious and transcendent, just as the core of the idea of Life is transcendent in relation to the perception of the living being.

Man cannot act directly on things with thought, because he does not perceive thought: he can, however, act physically through physical things, inasmuch as he perceives them with his physical senses. He does not actually perceive the thought by which he can think any object: it is sufficient for him that it be filled with sensory content, and only when identified with that content does he know it. He does not suspect that thought can fill itself with its own content and that, when filled with its own

content, it is itself perceptible. The discipline of concentration leads to this possibility.

The disciple begins to concentrate on the object: at first he necessarily has to deal with a series of representations, that is, with thought still filled with the sensible and intellectual image of the object. By taking concentration further, he arrives at the concept, or the thought-synthesis of the object. As his power of concentration strengthens over time, he can at a certain moment take the concept itself, the synthesis achieved, as his object: the objective content has disappeared, and in its place there is an essence, which at first is not easy for him to contemplate, due to his lack of familiarity with non-sensible contents. But it is precisely the contemplation of this essence that leads the disciple to the perception of the supersensible living.

In concentrating, the disciple performs an extraordinary operation, one that is not required by nature, but rather instinctively opposed by it: he calls upon the original thought to act. In the same way that, through ordinary thinking, he can reconstruct the essential process of the object constructed by man, so that from the visible he ascends to the invisible and sees the invisible become visible: so, by asking the concentration transferred from the object to the concept for essential forces of thought, normally latent, he experiences a living element, proper to the original nature of thought. He perceives this living element insofar as it transcends the dialectical or reflexive limit of thought: he can recognize this living element, identical to the supersensible that manifests itself in the organic world as Life.

By intensifying his concentration, the disciple experiences thought as pre-individual and therefore pre-dialectical Light. Thought reveals itself to him as a current carrying the same

original element that builds living Nature and flows in him as a vital or etheric body, also called the “subtle body.” The Life Light of thought is not conscious, because consciousness normally arises where this Light is reflected, devoid of Life: therefore, the ordinary human being perceives only the inanimate and consequently can operate objectively only through the inanimate. The dialectical consciousness in him manifests itself at a lower level than that at which it arises non-dialectically, or living, in the soul.

Concentration is always a concentration of thought, whatever the object or theme may be: but it is simultaneously an operation of the Will. There is no exercise of concentration that is not at the same time an exercise of the Will. It is precisely in the sphere of the Will that the living element of the concept can be recognized: that which constitutes the transcendent-immanent core of the concept, or of the idea, directed toward the living.

- *Meditation. The harmony of Thought with the Will is the basis of the balance and strength of the soul. The balance and strength of the soul open the way to its supersensible power. It is the power in which feeling, the most vast and liberating, rises again as Life.*
- *Contemplative concentration. The disciple contemplates the concept of the object, free from sensory elements: he has it before him as an objective sign, with or without form, a recognizable synthesis of the thoughts he has thought. The synthesis must be alive, intimately animated by the univocal flow of the thoughts that formed it. Attention must be increasingly calm, requiring no effort*

or will. The deepest will acts as he selflessly contemplates the synthesis as something objective, independent of him.

Contemplation must last at least three minutes and take place without interference from other thoughts, moods, or memories, so as to be absolute concentration.

This exercise leads the disciple to the perception of the predialectical Light of Thought.

When he thinks of the sensible object according to the typical exercise of concentration, he actually uses ordinary reflective thought, that is, the Light of thought normally reflected by the cerebral organ. This organ, being almost always physiologically unresponsive to its function, acts as a distorting mirror. The Light of thought is true and pure, but it is always reflected by a cerebral system that makes it untrue and impure: it is the origin of the subjective point of view, which continually opposes individual to individual, and beyond which it is difficult to go, because this implies the reconnection of the reflected Light with the original, pre-cerebral Light.

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- *The typical exercise of concentration allows thought to realize its own entity independent of the cerebral screen: it is essentially an act of will under the sign of the ego. Through this act, the ego temporarily restores its own order, which is regularly contradicted by everyday life: the latter stimulates the forces of the ego, but at the same time enslaves and corrupts them, giving rise to inner conflict, the origin of all human ills. Therefore, the typical exercise of concentration, in its simplicity, can alone lead*

to supersensible experience and to the inner equilibrium necessary for the unfolding of existence according to its spiritual principle.

In the exercise, the experimenter gathers the reflected light, which is the series of representations necessary to reconstitute the object: he performs an inner action that stimulates the ego and its identity with the original Light, not by accomplishing it directly—which he could not do—but by using the object as a support. If, at the level at which he is, he were to turn directly to the Light, he could only reject it: his current state of consciousness being intimately an instinctive rejection of the Light. He cannot but start from the level of reflected Light, but he can at the same time operate in accordance with the original Light.

The synthesis of the object is essentially the restitution of the one, undivided Light: apparently divided and analytical in reflection, that is, in dialectical thought. The concept is the sign of the one Light, but normally it is itself reflected. There is no concept that is not originally an operation according to the one Light, but not conscious, that is, accomplished by latent, pre-dialectical forces of thought, to which ordinary man is closed.

The asceticism of modern man consists precisely in the conscious conquest of the latent forces of the concept. If we take into account that, in essence, man regulates himself according to the concepts he actually has of things, we can understand how his whole life is a consequence of his conceptual formation, and the importance of asceticism, which makes him master of the formative forces of the concept. Normally, he uses concepts not according to their synthesis of Light, but as reflections, according to his psychic need that enslaves thought, except in the case of mathematical-physical thought.

In the typical exercise of concentration, the experimenter operates according to the one Light, but he can do so not because he possesses it, but because he operates with the will in the reflection: over which he acquires direct power through exercise, rising from multiplicity to synthesis. Through the exercise of contemplation of the concept, he uses this power directly. He moves himself in the One Light, that is, in pure thought, reunited with pure feeling and pure will: a single current of Force, which is the original Light. That he moves in this Force, however, does not mean that he already possesses it. He can move through it to the extent that he masters its laws.

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The conquest of the latent forces that form concepts, through right concentration, is the pre-initiatory task of the modern disciple. To pass from reflected thinking to its Light means for him to pass from the ancient “lunar path” to the “solar path,” that is, to transfer the center of inner activity from the astral body to the I, as the immanent I. It is a decisive act, because through it the ascetic overcomes the original defect of the soul: the defect that in ancient times made a transcendent or metaphysical path to the Divine necessary, rather than an immanent one.

All spiritual paths that precede the conscious experience of the concept can be considered lunar, whatever traditional form they take in the East or West: inasmuch as they operate through the astral body, not through the ego, even when they refer to an inner Subject. When they speak of an ego, a *Purusha*, or an *Atma-purusha*, they are actually referring to a transcendent ego that requires ecstatic elevation, not to an individual ego.

Since the beginning of his earthly formation, man has been working on Earth thanks to the guidance of Powers that act on his astral body, giving it the authority that actually belongs to the ego: Powers that will arouse the deepest opposition to the ego when it begins to act as the center of the autonomous life of consciousness. They cannot tolerate this autonomy: from the beginning, they give man knowledge of the Mysteries, spiritual vision, rituals, *yoga*, social direction, provided that the free ego does not arise in him: which, in modern times, will arise as the individual, at the lowest level, with its transcendent power initially directed toward the sensible: from which a science of physical nature will begin to emerge. This ego should not be considered the contingent ego, but recognized as the true ego, which awaits becoming aware of itself: of the value of its own autonomous consciousness.

Ever since the ancient breakdown, for millennia the ego will always feel subjugated in the soul, because it is subject to astral forces that are hierarchically inferior to it and enslave it to the impulses of lower nature: nevertheless, man will know that he can always neutralize this enslavement, insofar as he is obedient to rituals and rules that will maintain the spiritual tenor within him. Instincts and passions will devour him if he does not abide by the rules by which the astral body conforms to the power of the entities that dominate it, rather than to the ego. Hence, the ascetic will always seek the Spirit, *VAtma*, the Higher Self, outside himself, escaping from earthly individuality. In reality, however, it is only through this that he can fulfill his earthly experience. Revelation, ecstasy, samadhi occur through the soul, not through the individual ego, which appears for the first time in the soul through the synthetic activity of thought, the concept, and the undertaking of physical knowledge of the world. In the concept,

man begins to experience the Universal, which he once experienced outside himself as transcendent, with which identity implied ecstasy: while immanent identity begins in sensory perception and in the determination of the concept.

In the present age, man does not yet know the forces of the ego through which he forms concepts: he uses concepts at the level of the astral body, and therefore uses them without their real power. The age of the ego has come: concepts are now the instruments of ordinary thinking, but man is still played with by the ancient adversary, because although he uses concepts, he uses them in a reflected, unrealized, dialectical form. He builds with concepts as with empty words.

However, he cannot have concepts that are not the presence of the ego in the astral body, the power of identity: every time, in the sphere of the reflected astral, he eliminates the presence of the ego and living thought: in doing so, he cultivates evil in the soul, neurosis, the inability to receive strength from the center of himself. Thus, in seeking the supersensible dimension, he believes he must regress to past states of consciousness, renouncing the content of his present lucid consciousness, rather than proceeding forward, regaining those states through lucid consciousness. He devotes himself to psychic methods, *yoga*, or asceticism, promising strength, balance, and self-control, which he can draw only from the center of himself, insofar as he is able to perceive the force through which the concept becomes conscious content in the soul.

Man's fatal error is his enslavement of the nascent forces of the Spirit, which are independent of the astral body, to the dead impulses of the astral body. These forces emerge in rational thought, which becomes conscious on the dialectical plane

through the astral body. The nascent forces of the ego are once again enslaved to the astral, which always expresses the authority of the ancient dependence on dogmas. Today, this is the dogma of matter. In reflective or dialectical thinking, man continually cuts off from himself the pure forces of light in thinking, which emerge each time in the original formulation of the concept. Raising consciousness to the level of its own principle of Light is the task of concentration and meditation.

The Predialectical Essence

Meditation is a simultaneous concentration of thinking, feeling, and willing on a spiritual content that does not need to be elaborated, being already complete and sufficient in the form in which it presents itself. The theme arises immediately as a thought, but it must be left in its immediate form so that it can act directly on the soul: it must not be thought about. It is a direct content of the one Light, enclosed in a phrase or symbol taken from mystical or esoteric literature.

Meditation tends to bring a thought of Light to life in the soul, not through dialectical analysis, but according to the power of its initial resonance in the soul, until it reaches an intensity capable of arousing the perception of Light: which is initially etheric perception. The etheric world arises before the experimenter in dynamic images: force-images expressing supersensible presences. The possibility that the disciple may move according to the original Force of Light in this world of images, whose richness, power, and lightning speed, constantly transmuting, tend to overwhelm him, depends on whether he has adequately prepared the forces of consciousness through the typical exercise of concentration.

The exercise of thought is fundamental for the ignition of the inner act independent of the psyche, which is normally bound to the corporeal nature and in turn binds thought. This independence is essential for the perception of the etheric world and the etheric body to be regular: that is, it must be determined under the sign of the ego and not in the function of the psyche or the astral body; it must not obey the subtle powers of

psychophysiological nature. The experimenter must learn to distinguish the supersensible sphere from the sensible sphere, the objective higher reality from mediumistic appearances. Meditation becomes uplifting for him when he has truly mastered the exercise of concentration.

Meditation is, in essence, giving life to a thought, or an image, or an idea concerning the life of the Spirit, in such a way that it directly arouses, in its immediate dialectical form, the elevation of the soul: such a thought, thanks to its supersensible content, is already in itself a force of Light: it does not need analysis. It can be drawn from esoteric or mystical literature, or formed from the synthesis of a series of thoughts concerning inner experience, according to a procedure that will be followed in practice in the pages that follow: from time to time, a synthesis of specially elaborated thoughts will be given as the content of meditation. This content is not arbitrary, as it belongs to the Science of the Spirit, that is, it derives from objective supersensible experience.

Concentration and meditation enable the disciple to rise from reflective thinking to the Light of Life, in which thinking is one with pure feeling and pure will. It is the original, extra-conscious Light, whose annihilation or deterioration is responsible for the continuous production of ordinary waking consciousness. The current path of the Spirit does not consist in retreating from waking consciousness to past states of consciousness, in the illusion of finding the Light in them, but in proceeding from the present degree of consciousness towards the Light of which it is a projection.

The task of the ascetic is to rediscover the original Light through the current forces of waking consciousness. This

normally arises where the Light loses its power of Life as a reflection, but its forces are the Light itself, to which it normally opposes itself as dialectical consciousness. Such is the contradiction of consciousness. The ascent from reflected consciousness to its Light of Life is an exceptional task, but one that is cosmically foreseen: it is awaited by humanity as a process of reintegration, which must begin through the work of modern experimenters of the supersensible, capable of demystifying the myth and phantom-myth of modernity.

- *The disciple stands before the seed of a plant that is familiar to him. He observes the seed, its shape and color, and without taking his eyes off it, he imagines its sowing and subsequent sprouting from the earth, then its growth as a new plant, its branching and flowering, until it produces new fruits, in which it reappears as a seed.*
- *He must possess this imaginative process of birth, growth, and fruition as a synthesis and at the same time draw from it a subtle feeling, which he must bring to the seed as he continues to contemplate it.*
- *He must be able to experience this inner content as one with his perception, feeling that it belongs to the seed just as its physical characteristics belong to it.*

This exercise can lead the disciple to the perception of the etheric form of the seed: but while waiting for this achievement, the exercise is essentially formative of thought and its intimate harmony with feeling and will: it educates thought to the logic of the living, which is the true logic, not proceeding from cerebral mediation, but according to the extrasensory process of reality. In other words, it realizes the identity that the ego normally loses in

perception, encountering the sensible world through the forces of Light and Life. Liberated thought is called living because it is thought that begins to perceive, in itself and in entities, Life: the original Light.

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The original Light normally flows unrecognized, as predialectical thought, into dialectical thought, which is its reflection, or appearance, the *maya*. Dialectics is indeed indispensable to everyday experience, but it is useless for penetrating reality. Indeed, it is an obstacle.

As a fabric of words, dialectics lacks the power of penetration, which belongs to its pre-dialectical moment: only in this moment can man grasp himself as Subject. In dialectics, man ceases to be the Subject of experience: he cannot live according to his original being, nor can he therefore live the identity of the original Light with reality.

The disciple sees this original Light as the ultimate meaning of the disciplines, because he recognizes in it the source of strength, but above all the supersensible direction of his path. He recognizes it in the immediacy of thought prior to dialectical form. It is immediacy that needs no mediation, because, precisely as pure thought, without object, it is the first mediation. Only the immediate pure can become a mediating activity: it can do so because it is the true immediate, the original: it must be left as it is if it is to be perceived. To leave it as it is is to contemplate it.

The asceticism of thought consists precisely in experiencing this original, which does not require being thought: being the only activity of consciousness that does not require the integration of thought. It is itself the integrating thought. In this

way, there is a transition from thought to Thought-Force. The giving of thought becomes the flow of a Force that has nothing to do with dialectics.

- *Meditation. Any object requires being understood with thought, but thought itself does not require this. It does not need any other thought to give itself as it objectively is. Thought, which can give itself as an object, should not be understood but perceived: it is experienced as predialectical Light. This Light carries within itself the power of the Principle.*

The disciple can practice this meditation to the extent that he has mastered the exercise of concentration. When he realizes the giving of thought, he actually thinks according to the I, not according to the object: therefore, he can penetrate the object, which, however, as a sensible object, is the initial cause of the presence of the I in thought. Thought-force is the supersensible experience, possible for the ego, which realizes the consciousness of sensory experience.

There is no object that does not exist thanks to the presence of the ego in thought: this presence is normally unconscious. It is necessary to experience thought detached from the object in order to have the ego in thought: that is to say, in the astral body. This is the meaning of concentration and meditation. The experimenter must become aware of the absolute priority of thought in the genesis of consciousness: nothing before thought, which is to say nothing before the ego. This has nothing to do with the idealistic assumption pertaining to the plane of mere rationality. He can experience the priority of thought as continuity, not by thinking, but by contemplating thought as a chain of thoughts. First, he must willingly posit a thought: in a

second moment, he can contemplate, not think the thought. In this contemplation flows the higher current of the will, the power of the ego.

In essence, sensible objectivity exists not for its own sake, but to give rise to the experience of the ego in thought: the ego that is always there, but unconscious. What is urgently needed in our time is the ultimate meaning of conscious experience of the sensible: supersensible experience: the consciousness of determination, that is, of the presence of the ego in thought that experiences the sensible.

The experience of the original moment of thought is the new spiritual element that can be realized by the modern ascetic. The original moment should not be thought, but perceived, since it is living thought in a form that does not require any further form. Form is predialectical thought: it must be recognized through concentration and contemplation, since determination normally prevents us from seeing it: once seen, it is essence as thought: it does not need to be thought, because it is at the same time thought and thinking: living form, or the life of form.

The technique of such an experience does not consist in turning one's attention directly to the original moment of thought, which is indeed ungraspable, but in concentrating one's thought on a theme or an object in such a way that the connection with the original moment is first established indirectly in the flowing form of thought: this can be intensified until it is objectively perceptible beyond the object. The experience of the thinking essence requires passing through the object in order to reach the concept, which unconsciously or abstractly has the essence within itself.

The original moment of thought is always present in the soul, by virtue of determination, but it is ignored and normally avoided by human beings, who fear being conscious of their thoughts, fear having autonomous or living thoughts, thoughts-essence, thoughts-force.

I and Ego

- *Pure concentration. The experimenter concentrates on a geometric figure, e.g., a triangle. He thinks of the different forms of the triangle, equilateral, isosceles, rectangle, etc., until he arrives at the pure concept of the triangle, which summarizes all its forms. The concept thus attained must stand before the consciousness, precise and yet independent of any formal or sensible residue.*

It is helpful for the disciple to observe meditatively how, in order to perform the exercise, he is essentially already moving from the pure concept: by drawing on this, he can evoke the various forms of the triangle. However, he does not normally possess this pure concept: he draws it from the back of his consciousness and reconstructs it through representations until he has it objectively before him at the end of the exercise. This is indeed the meaning of the concentration exercise: to realize the latent formative forces of the concept.

- *The disciple concentrates on the circle until he reaches the pure concept. He must then ask himself why the circle has its center within itself and not outside. In reality, the equidistance of the points of the circle is spatial, but insofar as it refers to a non-spatial point, namely the center, which as such is the negation of space. Without the unambiguous reference of space to such a negation, the equidistance of the points of the circle would not be possible. It is possible with respect to a metaphysical, or non-spatial, point, which every figure, as*

spatial, cannot have outside its own form, but rather inside it. Form is, in fact, the 'outside' of that point.

Every spatial figure expresses in its form the tendency towards the exhaustion of space, in order to reveal itself as it really is: as an idea. This explains why the area of a square, whose side is exactly one-fourth of the perimeter of a circle, is considerably smaller than that of the circle itself.

In reality, in the circle, equidistance from the metaphysical point reaches its maximum spatial expression.

Such meditations educate the disciple in pure thought. He becomes familiar with a nucleus of Light of Thought, which acquires ever greater objective intensity until he can evoke it as a transcendent and at the same time powerful point of reference in the face of the disturbances that tend to overwhelm him. The nucleus of Light of Thought becomes for him a center of strength bearing the maximum power of impersonality, or selflessness.

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Concentration becomes real when dedication to a theme polarizes the movement of thought and its extra-conscious ramifications without limit: that is, when it can indirectly act in an area where extra-rational Powers of nature usually maneuver thought. The purpose of concentration is to remove thought from these Powers: to provide it with the awareness of being, in its autonomy and in its original connection with the I, a Power based on itself.

The exercise that spiritual science fundamentally sets the disciple in this sense is that of concentration, using an object of minimal significance which, as we have seen, enables thought to

withdraw from unconscious psychic connections and draw directly on its own supersensible source. It is a fiction identical to that of modern mathematical-physical thinking: which, through external objectivity, realizes the pure determination of thought as an expression of the ego, rather than as a necessity imposed on the psyche by the one-dimensional sphere of quantity.

The danger for people today is precisely that they use the volitional determination of thought, which is an expression of the ego, and thereby cut it off from the stream of the ego, which nevertheless continues to flow within it, denied, descending into the instinctive sphere. The forces of nature, from which conscious determination had the task of freeing thought, regain hold of thought as reinforced anti-spiritual forces, capable of suggesting spiritual, ethical, and social directions to it. It is up to those who experiment with the supersensible to recognize the interplay of forces behind appearances, so that the deterioration of the higher stream of the ego does not make the human destiny even more dire.

The function of the typical exercise of concentration is intuitive in this sense: it is a volitional form of reconnecting thought with its supersensible source, and thus with the ego. Its aim is pure thought: thought that ceases to be manipulated by the ego or by nature, and is therefore a vehicle for the highest force in human beings.

Concentration must enable thought to express itself according to its own objective nature, as pure thought, independent of the psyche and, as such, capable of moving with maximum autonomy in consciousness. Through this movement, the experimenter comes into contact with the Power of an infinitely supersensible Principle, to which his inner nature is normally closed and resists

through subtle forms of fear, since this Power is the force that overcomes all fear.

Thanks to the development of conscious attention in the exercise of concentration, the experimenter reabsorbs into the univocal, or conceptual, process of thought the forces that normally, by withdrawing from the control of consciousness, constitute the *vis* of the lower moods and impulses. It is precisely these forces that hinder concentration and, through subtle cunning, suggest pretexts for avoiding it, or performing it mechanically, or even considering it harmful. In reality, it brings about the true birth of Thought: it restores to thought its function as the vehicle of the Principle of Reintegration. True concentration, in fact, leads to the conversion of thought.

When performing the exercise of concentration, the experimenter essentially faces the real situation of his inner life, because he places himself from the point of view of the ego, tending to restore an order that goes from the ego to the astral to the etheric to the physical: an order that in reality never exists, because it is regularly inverted. What happens to man in the physical world, in fact, acts on the etheric, impresses the astral and grasps the thought until the ego agrees, unable to determine the response to the external stimulus according to the laws of its essential nature in relation to reality. Thus, thought is normally an instrument of the lower ego, or of selfishness: that is, of the astral body enslaved to physical corporeality, forgetful of its own substantial independence from it. Similarly, the concept lacks its latent forces and, as an abstraction, becomes discursive food for dialectics.

Concentration has the task of overcoming egoism, using the immediate dialectical vehicle of egoism, which is reflective

thought. As long as thought is dialectical, or reflective, despite its logical virtues, it is an instrument of the “animal” entity of man, that is, of selfishness: it does not grasp its own reality, nor the reality of the world, and therefore works through Knowledge against the element of Life, from which it simultaneously draws the continuum of its own reflective activity.

The more thought is centered in itself, the more the inner man becomes essential, living in his own depth. He feels that he is at the threshold of the supersensible, that is, in a world of powerful truth, in relation to whose reality the sensible world seems to lose its character of reality. This feeling is important as a sign of the level achieved in concentration.

Another sign is the inner state of de-dramatization of human events, accompanied by a sense of vast understanding for every being, whether they appear innocent or guilty. Once their inner process is intuited, it is justified as necessary and therefore requiring an element of liberation, which can only come from the meditator freeing themselves from the *maya* of thought.

The asceticism of concentration and meditation begins to be authentic when it generates a feeling of unlimited compassion for beings passionately bound to their own error as to their own truth, that is, bound to an existence woven of struggle and desire, the meaning of which they do not possess until after Death. Inseparable from this feeling is a willingness to offer help. But one discovers that, beyond all obvious or immediate forms, true help is the idea, the pure supramental element, the Principle of Light of liberation.

The idea is not a specific idea, religious, traditional, mystical, or political. It is easy to refer to an idea that unites according to a

specific choice: this is not the true idea, but a manifestation of it, which, when it succeeds in operating as the creative idea, actually enslaves man, giving him the illusion of acting according to truth and freedom: it groups people together according to a common psychic or animal denominator. The true idea is the pure Principle of Light of thought: the power that alone can unite free beings. But it is the conquest of a redemption of thought, possible to those who know the art of freeing the mind from intellectualism and the pretense of cosmic Force under the *maya* of thought. This Force is man's true help, because it is his own and has the power to lift him above any weakness or difficulty. The decision that must be made at this point is: we must be stronger, for the sake of others, for the help that the world needs.

True strength comes from concentration. There is no difficult situation, external or internal, physical or psychic—mischief, fatigue, illness, etc.—that can prevent the exercise of concentration. If anything, the opposite is true. The task of concentration is to restore the central Force of the soul, whatever the conditions in which it takes place. It is a mistake to believe that concentration presupposes external or internal conditions: it must be practicable in any condition, since it appeals to Thought, that is, to the only activity that is free in itself and has nothing to do with the medium through which it manifests itself. This consideration can help us to better understand the meaning of the technique of concentration that we propose.

It is not preordained conditions that enable us to experience the I: it is the I that must be able to experience itself through all kinds of conditions in the present age. In this sense, we can grasp the difference between the path of the new times and that of traditional techniques, particularly yoga. The path of the new age

appeals to a force that has penetrated the earth and works through the maya of human egoism, initially taking the form of thought.

Thought is actually already in its own world of forces, but unconsciously identified with dialectical *maya*. By willingly intensifying its movement, thought ceases to coincide with the dialectical form, becomes independent of it: it identifies with its own pure force and connects with its source. But in order to accomplish this, thought *needs* the *sui maya* and the dialectical movement in the sphere of forces-m«v« that stimulate its initial mobility. Therefore, in concentration, as in meditation, difficulties present themselves as forms of *maya*, but also as indications of the force that must be liberated within: the measure of the intensity of concentration that must be achieved.

The rediscovery of the idea, or of the living concept, is in this sense the realization of the atmic state of thought. Thought rediscovers its essence, realizing in embryo what will initially be the state of *Atma*, or of Man-Spirit.

The Light of Life: The Concept

- *Meditation. Man experiences an essence within himself every time he succeeds in conceiving the essence of an entity: the essence is true and is at the center of that entity, but it does not lie within it, outside the thought that thinks it, beyond his intuition of it. That “beyond” is internal to thought: it is the Life of Light, which concentration has the task of rediscovering.*

He who thinks the essence of a thing as its foundation can discover that this foundation intuitively arises in him, through thought, as essence-thought: it is in him the moment of identity, or of synthesis, which escapes dialectical consciousness. He thinks it in the thing and belonging to it, but insofar as it emerges in his soul as objective content. Of course, this objective content is not conscious: it always becomes abstraction in dialectical consciousness. The task of concentration is to restore its concreteness.

Man is the bearer of the inner content of which entities have been deprived. The asceticism of thought makes it possible to contemplate essence as living thought, which does not need to be thought in order to give itself, since it is already a formation of thought.

This asceticism is the true meaning, the ultimate goal, of the conscious experience of modern man: it is the meaning of the determination of thought from which modern investigation of the sensible proceeds: an investigation of which the traditional ascetic, or the scientist of the ancient world, could not feel the

need because, in the place of determination, the indeterminate Universal was given to him as the inner content of entities. This content was there: it was not necessary to evoke it as essence with the conscious forces of the soul. The task of the traditional ascetic was essentially to rise to the impersonal level of the inner Light in order to know its identity with the essence of beings. It was an experience of the spiritual astral body rather than of the ego. This explains why traditional ideographic languages did not contain universals, or concepts such as “tree,” “animal,” “way,” etc., but rather specific trees, specific animals, etc.

The moment of determination of physical-mathematical thinking, realizing instead the first form of independence from the ancient psyche, or from the astral body, is the individual moment of the soul: it springs willingly from the ego, as a pure relationship with entities, thanks to exclusive sensory vision.

The ancient ascetic saw the spiritual entity that was embodied in all the lions of the Earth: he did not need to form the concept of “lion.” This is the conscious act of modern man, who ceases to be aided by revelation and puts individual forces into action, finding the Universal within himself through the universal that is individualized in him as thought.

Primordial forces of thought, once transcendent, have become, thanks to thinking determination, individual and immanent at the sensible level, presenting themselves as formers of the concept, which, in the dialectical moment of determination, is the abstract concept of the lion, but, in its original moment, is the identity with the entity that lives univocally in all lions on Earth.

- *Meditation. The fact that modern man has the concept of the lion essentially means that he actualizes within himself the moment of identity with the supersensible entity of the lion: a superconscious moment that escapes ordinary consciousness but which he can experience through the vivification of the concept.*

The concept enlivened through concentration gives intuitive identity with the extrasensory entity of a species or genus of the animal or vegetable kingdom, not the perception of it, which is a further achievement of asceticism.

The pure intuitive moment of the concept is not conscious, inasmuch as it is pre-dialectical: it is the movement of the ego independent of the astral body, brought about by the conscious act on the dialectical plane. In fact, ordinary analytical thinking takes place on the level of the astral body, with its series of representations and its tendency to reduce concepts to their limits, the level of which is instead that of the ego, independent of the astral body. This is the independence of the conscious principle from the psyche, the modern bearer of neurosis, or the illegitimate continuation of the astral body's domination over the ego. The real situation of modern man can be understood if we take into account that the intuitive moment of the concept is the true prerequisite of all knowledge in which identity is realized, the initial overcoming of duality. It is the prerequisite of the mathematical and physical sciences, insofar as they are real and not rhetorical, as they are gradually becoming: it is the prerequisite operating in the logically dialectical human being, but unknown to him.

The experimenter must be able to perceive a clear separation between the domain of living thought in which the ego operates

and that of dialectical thought belonging to the astral body: it is like distinguishing a real body from its shadow. The difference between the pre-dialectical moment and the dialectical moment consists in the fact that the former is full of Life, while the latter is devoid of Life: it is dead. In the pre-dialectical moment, thinking, which is much more than ordinary thought, grasps the living element of entities: in the dialectical projection, it loses this element, of which only a reflection remains. But with this it loses the reality of the real: Materialism is inevitable: its conceptual determination is abstract, it grasps only the calculable, that is, the real, which is the dead appearance of reality.

The ultimate meaning of the Western experience of the concept, therefore, as an experience of the astral body, and independent of it, is the asceticism of thought, capable of leading to the perception of the living moment of the ego in the concept, which is its truth and its reality: elusive to dialectical consciousness, which is mere consciousness of the astral body. The discipline of concentration allows us to experience this living moment of thought, unbound by any category of physical or psychic nature, being the very source of this. It carries within itself the power to overcome otherness: the power to solve human problems, impenetrable to cadaverous dialectical thought.

By experiencing the dynamic moment of the concept, the ascetic overcomes otherness, in that by depersonalizing himself he transfers the center of consciousness to the ego: in reality, he transfers the sense of self from the astral to the ego, which does not need to feel itself in order to be. By overcoming otherness, he is free.

* * *

In humans, it is normally the astral body that is “free,” not the bearer of freedom, which is the ego. The false freedom of the astral body is that to which humans regularly subject the ego, because they actually feel themselves through the astral: they feel themselves in the astral, in the psyche, not in the subject of that feeling, that is, not in the ego independent of the psyche. Every human exaltation of freedom, in effect, moving from the astral body, moves from an impulse contrary to real freedom: which can only spring from the liberation of thought from the psyche, that is, from the articulation of the free ego from the astral in thinking, feeling, and willing. The Western experience of the concept was only the first movement of a restriction of the centrality of the ego with respect to the astral body.

In esoteric-mythical terms, it can be said that the astral body is in itself divine in nature, but alienated from this as a consequence of the “Luciferic seduction”: stretched out according to illusory autonomy towards an evil and a good, which are such only for it, for its subjective *cliché*, while for others they may be the opposite. The astral struggles and exalts itself, depresses and collapses: inasmuch as it does not move according to the ego, but according to a content that is never true, because it is reflected: Lucifer's deception. By dominating the astral, Lucifer involves the ego, which believes itself to be the Subject, without ever really being so, because it identifies with the astral and in this is indeed free, but according to Lucifer's impulse.

Lucifer was able to penetrate the human astral body in a “lunar” epoch, that is, in an epoch in which the ego, from its solar sphere, could not be touched by such penetration, but rather dominated it: the “sin,” the “fall,” consisted in the fact that at a certain moment the ego became inherent in the astral body,

identified itself with it. This made it necessary for the heavenly powers to cast man into earthly incarnation, whose physical laws would neutralize an autonomy for which man was not yet ready. Lucifer was able to act on the soul through the astral body: the ego became part of the astral body and acquired self-awareness through it. This had the consequence that the ego began to bind itself through desire to the necessarily animal nature of the body. Lucifer's seduction thus involved a "part" of the ego in the astral, but not the whole ego. The higher "part" remained intact, and since then its symbol in the Wisdom of the Mysteries has been the Tree of Life.

According to this view of the primordial history of man, when the "fall" occurred, the Spiritual World first came to the aid of man by sending gods—angels, archangels, principalities—to Earth who, in human form, as occult teachers of initiatory communities, worked to limit Lucifer's dominion. But this help proved insufficient over time, when, as a final effect of Lucifer's action, man, becoming increasingly earthbound, moved toward total imprisonment in the realm of Matter, that is, within the sphere of the other Obstacle, Ahriman, to the point of needing an exclusive science of the physical world. Since then, only the action of the Solar Logos within human beings can make the individual impulse of freedom the human vehicle of the original force. The Higher Self itself, that is, the Self connected with the Tree of Life, is called upon to act in man: by its own virtue, the Self can detach itself from the astral and make the freedom that has developed as a Luciferic impulse the vehicle of liberation.

The domination of dialectics of any kind is the last attempt of Lucifer and Ahriman to prevent the human ego from finding itself on this side of the astral world they dominate. This

discovery is possible thanks to the liberation of thought. Dialectics can provide all the fictions of the spiritual, including that of liberation.

The ancient Science of the Sacred did not possess the key to the liberation of the ego from the astral world in corporeality, but only to detachment from it and to ecstasy. For earthly experience, this Science possessed only the key to the Law that governed, through conformity to certain radical conditions, the destructive impulses of the astral body. The Luciferic element was induced to function according to the Spirit, not by virtue of the free ego, but thanks to an authority higher than that of the ego. Lucifer now needs the restoration of the asceticism proper to this ancient Science in order to prevent man as a free ego from redeeming the astral: man can do this thanks to the conscious power of Light, springing from the concept, that is, thanks to the restoration of the Tree of Life, according to the Science of the New Mysteries. Only this can justify the connection with the ancient Science.

The Life of Light

Because it does not know its own moment of independence from the cerebral support, thought is devoid of Life. Because of this support, it is subject to nature, becoming dialectic and the doctrine of human-animal impulses: man lives according to the relationship of the astral body with the world, unconsciously excluding the ego, which is in reality the source of the relationship.

Not possessing its own element of Life, thought cannot grasp the element of Life in nature: this appears as the outer world, which imposes itself on the inner world: the vision that legitimately appears dual. The dual vision, however, arises itself thanks to the Life of Light: which continually annihilates itself in the form in which man, out of his own sentient necessity, arrests it.

- *Meditation. Thought can discover that its own resonance according to Nature is its own movement, and that the image of Nature, which is other and real in itself, is the reflected form of the identical Light, close to a content that is no different from the form in which it immediately appears. It must penetrate its own Light in order to rediscover the secret Light of Nature.*

Form arises as thought-form, whether reflected or not: it has no other way of arising in consciousness. It arises from perception, but it is perception in which the ego is present, in the vehicle of predialectical thought. This is the living element of perception, which remains unconscious at the dialectical-cerebral

level, inasmuch as it normally passes into sensation and representation, which are necessary for cerebral consciousness.

The cerebral organ ceases to be the isolator of consciousness if, through the intensified exercise of thought, it is brought to rest and immobility. The more immobile it is, the more it leaves the thought force free. This immobility is the attainment of mental silence, which in turn is the attainment of right concentration. Concentration is for the modern seeker the possibility of restoring to the ego the relationship normally usurped by the astral body: the possibility of perceiving the determining force of thought, normally used by him for every logical operation, but not known in itself, in its "pure state": in its pure state, being free from cerebrality, it is the vehicle of the ego.

Dialectical consciousness, as cerebral consciousness, tends to cognitively assume the given, according to the modern forces of determination of thought. But this assumption is vitiated by the constitutional dullness of dialectical consciousness, a remnant of the atavistic passivity towards revelation, no longer justified by the dynamic athiale of determination. This atiaidity is expressed above all as the inability of determination to know itself, to distinguish itself from the cerebral support that allows its dialectical expression. In other words, determination, despite being an expression of the ego, illegitimately becomes a vehicle of the astral body, thus renewing the ancient usurpation of the power of the ego by the astral body.

Due to insufficient self-awareness, affected by a residual mystical attitude, the inner process of perceiving and thinking in modern man stops at the sensory limit: it leaves an unfinished part outside itself, and this part takes on a form, which is itself a thought form, correlated to a content supposed within the form,

as a thing in itself, or a foundation: which is instead further thought: form of form, which the obtuse dialectical consciousness mistakes for a real and, beyond the perceived and the thought.

It is thought, in fact, that equally ignores the pre-dialectical process of perception and the pre-dialectical moment of thinking determination: thus it finds itself opposed to a metaphysical world, or a physical world. And if it represents them and, thus represented, investigates them without penetrating them, it is because internally it stops at the dialectical cerebral limit, and externally it stops at the quantitative cerebral limit. Thus, in modern form, the ancient evil of the soul dominated by the adversaries of the ego continues: adversaries who need reflected light, the reflected ego, reflected thought, to prevent the birth of the ego.

This thought nevertheless expresses the intelligence of matter, bound to the darkness of matter. Its characteristic is the perfect dialectical articulation of Knowledge, through which physical or metaphysical reality is already interpreted, with its distinctions, its struthires, its names, its univocity, in which everything is understood, said, explained, or is being explained, everything is analytically carried out according to the initial theme: which is always a condition of thought, a presupposition in itself, a presupposition to the Spirit, which must simply adapt to it, renouncing being the Spirit capable of experiencing itself before any arrangement or tradition.

The Intelligence of Darkness offers a pre-established path to thought, providing it with the answer to every question, according to the inexhaustible systematism of the presupposed content. It tends by all means to prevent thought from knowing its own movement independent of content, whatever that may

be: it works in such a way that thought does not distinguish itself from the object and considers itself valid only insofar as it is filled with objectivity, without which it would be nothing. The Intelligence of Darkness provides everything to thought as an interpretation of the earthly, at the level of absolute but unconscious alienation, or at the level of reflected Light, so that thought does not perceive its free being, its original Light, its cosmic origin, its independence from all knowledge: which is true Thought. Over which the Intelligence of Darkness could do nothing. Cosmic Intelligence has a very different relationship with the human mind: it leaves human thought free, it does not manipulate it: it can only connect with it where it is capable of distinguishing itself from its own object and of having its own movement as its content: where it faces problems and events with forces drawn from its own depths: where it is capable of solitude and courage, of open-mindedness and adialecticity. While the Intelligence of Darkness needs to lull human thought to sleep through the logical-dialectical process and the illusion of unlimited knowledge in the quantitative-sensible direction, Cosmic Intelligence needs awake thought, capable of absolute freedom and self-consciousness, in order to transmit to it the power to overcome the sensible limit, reflexivity, and the dialectical prison.

This dual polarity is reflected in the current alternative of the life of the soul, in which man's instinctive attitude toward the supersensible reality of the Earth is decisive. Reflective or dialectical thinking, in fact, does not have the power to process the deep psychic element, which is essentially dominated by fear; therefore, it resorts to the palliatives of psychic analysis. In dialectically automated man, intelligence, deprived of autonomous movement, does not express real thought, but rather

psychic content, with regard to the idea of a real world beyond the everyday and apparent one: so that in reality the fear of the supersensible world, acting as an unconscious force of dialectics, organizes and validates in the forms of culture the unreality of the exclusively measurable world.

The experimenter led to overcome the reflective state of thought, moving instead according to an impulse to rediscover the reality of Nature in the Supernatural, overcomes within himself the psychic element bound to corporeality: that is, he overcomes fear, but for this very reason he is led to overcome the spirit of aversion inseparable from this bond. Rather than a superficial brotherhood entrusted to the abstract mechanistic nature of social planning, he is led to a brotherhood that first and foremost goes from soul to soul, thanks to conscious self-movement. But only such self-movement can benefit the evolutionary process of human society.

* * *

Ideological knowledge and physical knowledge arising from reflective thought, incapable of perceiving its own element of freedom, are inevitably dogmatic. Dogmatism is to assert a truth as self-evident, outside the thought that gives it meaning and conceives its foundation as an idea, ignoring the idea that has its foundation at its center. The dogmatic position arises at the limit where thought stops, in order to be dialectical, taking the form of a content thought to be impenetrable, to which it gives the name of reality. A reality represented by the Spirit, foreign to the Spirit, conditioning the Spirit: a reality that is indeed unreal, because it is presupposed, in the form it has, to the Spirit, and to which the Spirit must conform, ignoring the power of relation through which it is possible to conceive it and to conform to it.

In effect, the otherness of the world, the reality of physical nature for the body and of metaphysical nature for the Spirit, duality, the world external to man, whether physical or spiritual, the being that man continually finds outside himself and seems to have its foundation in itself, can be symbolized by the Kantian thing-in-itself: the “being” known, in its radical withdrawal from knowledge. If we look at it, this being in itself of reality is an idea, but an idea devoid of life, abstractly opposed to itself, an anti-idea.

This being is indeed apparent outside of man, but as a being in itself, as a *noumenon*, it is an idea opposed (to the true idea: it is the idea of all idolatry at the dialectical, materialistic, or mystical level, moved by forces opposed to the true idea, which has within itself an autonomous center of force, capable of expressing its own movement, where it coincides with the intuitive moment of consciousness. Its transcendence becomes immanent when the center of individual being is realized at its center, as if from a foundation.

It is the foundation that man, incapable of grasping the original moment of thought, thinks outside himself as content impenetrable to thought. He conceives an unknowable and does not realize that he is placing it outside of conception itself, that is, outside the activity that alone is responsible for knowledge. By conceiving metaphysical or physical causes, foreign to his knowledge, he cannot but be dogmatic. Physical facts and metaphysical facts dictate law with equal authority. Although they represent two opposite polarities, they have in common the most intimate mental opposition, the original Light: which is the ancient opposition of the astral body to the ego, that is, to the Logos.

Two currents of culture are recognizable behind the struggle against the thought that carries the Logos: two currents that seem to fight each other, that fight each other on the surface, but are united in depth by the impulse to prevent man from recognizing the element of permanence within modern conscious thought. Undoubtedly, this thought is arid, poor in Spirit, capable of all dialectical transformations, but at its level, which is the lowest reached by the soul, it is in itself an expression of the power of the Spirit, which demands to be rediscovered. It is a question of redeeming this thought, but in order to redeem it, it must be possessed: its dynamic element must be freed from the infernal power that expresses itself through it. Let us take up again the thread of our considerations about the unfinished process of thought, which cannot but have as its counterpart a spiritual world on which to speculate, or an external world to measure. It is such a thought that, if it aspires to the Divine, needs the help of "tradition," because it is incapable of seeing its own birth as the Light of the Logos immersing itself in the human: as unreflected Light. And if it wants physical reality, it needs to have faith in facts and demonstrations, as if the truth were in them and not in its inner assent to their symbolic tracing of the truth: as thought having within itself the power of truth.

Dialectical thought cannot truly grasp the physical or metaphysical world because it does not possess the process by which it knows it, taking it as real outside itself: a process that is internal to it, like the *tantum* of the physical or metaphysical reality it manages to penetrate. What remains external to this process of knowledge is not outside man, but within thought. From thought, as reflected thought, arises the external image of the world, and this image is opposed to it as reality, which in effect is not reality, but the symbol of its limit.

The inner power of the idea, as the principle of man's essential force, has nothing to do with the idea of Idealism, whose meaning is speculation, that is, dialectic mistaken for inner action. In the inner power

of the idea, the esotericist of this time recognizes the essential power of Life to which the ancient Initiations and mystical asceticism tended. He has the idea within himself at all times as something immediate: it can manifest its power where it is intensely willed in its core, or from the center from which it moves.

- *Meditation. The idea is an entity of Will: a germinal power of the Will. Those who experience it realize this Will as the raw material of magical working.*

Those who do not succeed in mastering the idea become possessed by ideologies: they therefore live in the sphere of animality. All human knowledge, experience, and perception ascend to the idea as to the essence: the original germ that he has the task of restoring to things. It is the operation by which alone man can overcome in himself the materiality of things and the bond to animal nature.

- *Meditation. The external image of reality arises from the flow of Light from the soul towards the senses. In this image, the encounter between the soul and the world is already taking place, inasmuch as inanimate Matter resurfaces in forms and colors: it begins to become interiority, a relationship of thought, an idea.*

Forms and colors are already the etheric relationship of Light, through perception: thus, from point to point of reality, from the

most elementary physical measurement to the sublime calculation, to the idea of energy, etc., the relationship is always thought. It is not the relationship intuited by idealistic thought, incapable of overcoming the reflective condition and therefore of becoming independent of the sensible processes, but rather the unseen element of Life in such thought: whose experience requires asceticism, inner action, that is, the exhaustion of speculation.

The Threshold of Light

The power of relation of thought is the fabric through which the image of the world begins to arise as an inner world. This power of relation is used by man, but it is unknown to him: he continually connects point to point, moment to moment, thing to thing within himself. The connection is in reality a relation from thought to thought, from concept to concept: not from object to object. Man believes it to be an external connection, necessary to him, while it actually takes place in his consciousness, but in reality it is intimate to things. It takes place in him according to a unifying process identical to that which is at the basis of living Nature: however, it carries within itself the power to reawaken, where it is combined with autonomous impetus, the original element that Nature has lost.

The original unity itself, as imperceptible Light, pervades the soul of man at the moment of knowledge.

But man, in knowing, can accept error and hold it to be truth. In this case, only the movement by which he knows is truth. The original unity is the power of knowledge, not its content, for which man is responsible. Through this power, man is free to generate truth or falsehood, good or evil: this is precisely what determines his karma and, therefore, in relation to this, the instance of freedom as an act of responsible knowledge. The original unity could not produce the content of knowledge itself, by its own authority, automatically, without paralyzing the creative process of the Spirit, that is, the process of Self-Consciousness, which takes place where the ego simultaneously inheres in and opposes the astral body, through autonomous

mental experience. Self-consciousness must willingly, through asceticism, be able to identify with the original unity, inasmuch as it begins by actualizing the free movement of thought, present according to the ego in ordinary knowledge.

At a certain moment, Self-Consciousness recognizes itself as the Force of the ego, which is at the beginning and remains the Light of the Principle at every point of its manifestation. The disciple feels himself at the Threshold of Light.

The inner faculty of perceiving Light is dormant in him, inasmuch as it belongs to his original state, that is, to his cosmic nature. When it awakens in him through right asceticism, he can discover that the series of perceptions of the world is given to him because the soul emanates Light toward things through the sense organs. This Light is the continuous supersensible gift of the Sun through the soul. Astral-etheric Light always moves from man toward things.

He does not see this radiation of the original Light through the senses, but he can sense it by looking at the Sun as a symbol of the eternal radiation of Light: in reality, the world appears to him thanks to the sensible reflection of this Light, which is supersensible in itself. He does not see his own Light: he emanates it, and it appears to him only as a reflection.

He can intuit how the world became visible, in that eyes capable of seeing it were formed. The light that was previously internal flowed through the eyes toward the external world, stimulated by the light of the sun: it became a perceptible relationship, while remaining supersensible in itself. The Sun awakened the eye to the outer Light because, through the eye, it radiates the inner Light. The inner Light flows from the astral

body as the power of the Sun, but its cosmic principle works through the I, because the I in its essence moves from the solar Logos.

When the disciple understands how this light can become visible again, becoming conscious experience, he is truly on the threshold of light. He then understands a task that is both severe and grandiose: to cease killing the light. The light that radiates from him into the world through his thoughts and senses is constantly being altered and dying, because he is not present to it with the solar principle of the I. He constantly robs it of its life power, so that he may feel his own thoughts and sensations. Therefore, human love can only receive vitality from the instincts, that is, from the altered Light.

At this point, the disciple understands the true meaning of “pure thinking” or “pure perception”: to free the world from the ego. Through asceticism, he strives for the pure perception of Light in thought, in sensory impressions, in breath: which is the pure presence of the Self in the life of the soul.

- *After the exercise of concentration, the disciple practices contemplating the Light, seeing it as a rising Sun illuminating the inner darkness. He evokes the ether of Heat and the ether of Light, radiating into the world from the spiritual Sun. He must feel that the radiant power of the Sun is the same life force that animates the beating of the heart.*

Love and Wisdom flow into the world from the spiritual Sun. But man perceives only the physical Sun, which is the symbol or *maya* of the real Sun. The entire cosmic-spiritual world can radiate its forces toward man, inasmuch as it first causes them to

flow into the Sun. The Sun is the great mediator between the “crystalline sky” and the Earth. The secret of the ascetic of the new age is to know that the spiritual principle of the Sun is present on Earth and works as the inner light of the I.

The light of the principle, as the solar movement of the I, disappears in ordinary dual vision: it is reflected. Man is free only in reflection: reflection of a Light that is alive in the I. The I is its bearer. Human pain, whatever its pretext, is always an interruption of the flow of Light in the reflected vision: the initial synthesis is ignored in its lower projection and, as such, that is, as otherness, opposed to its own source.

A continuous inversion of the original motion of Light manifests itself as human freedom. This freedom arises from the Principle superior to duality, or from the Principle of immediate identity with the world, but in opposition to it. It cannot arise except in the sphere of sensible otherness and opposition to the Spiritual. But the possibility of grasping itself as essence is its desire to be where its free being springs forth, its affirmation of the I: its movement from the I. It is the I that it can draw upon within the sphere of consciousness. Within the sphere of consciousness, man can encounter the Logos, to which he could once rise only by transcending consciousness, detaching himself from the human. Now he can realize it in the human.

- *Meditation on the words:* “En archè én o Logos,” “In the beginning was the Word”: we must feel the whole of creation arising from the original act of the Word.

The disciple must hold this image in his consciousness for as long as possible, until it becomes a living feeling: one that he can

recognize and evoke in moments of ordinary life, which tend to dampen the supersensible impulse within him.

The realm of the senses is the realm of duality, but it is illusory, because it can only become human experience on condition that duality is overcome. However, it is the overcoming that man does not normally perceive. Sensible knowledge springs from the initial overcoming of duality, but it is simultaneously the realm of ignorance of the overcome duality. Ignorance is the lack of knowledge of the Logos, that is, of the original synthesis from which determination proceeds as thought giving itself to the sensible. The synthesis is germinally accomplished, but in the movement of determination it limits itself in relation to the finitude of sensible perception: it overcomes the initial otherness, but immediately stops dialectically. The synthesis has indeed begun, but, unrecognized, it is interrupted: it is confronted with its own product, the apparent world, the perceived-thought that appears as otherness: the realm of contingent freedom, whose real meaning is not to express itself in the sensible, which will not allow it to go beyond its limits, but to bring the synthesis to completion.

The initial synthesis is a gift; it belongs to the mystery of human evolution, but its realization is an act of individual freedom, possible for modern conscious man.

- *Meditation on the gift of the Principle of Light. “The light shines in the darkness.”*

Freedom is the splendor of Light realized in the will. Light germinates in perception and thought, but through a destructive process, a creative moment is simultaneous. By perceiving and thinking, man unconsciously realizes, according to a natural

process, the Death and Resurrection of Light. The disciple consciously carries forward this process, which is cosmic in itself.

Freedom is the possibility of realizing this cosmic process through the individual ego. It is the conscious fulfillment of synthesis, that is, the overcoming of the dialectical limit that prevents us from seeing in our inner volitional life the Light, the germinal power that resolves duality. It resolves duality because it contains within itself the sensible: it cannot have a Matter opposed to itself—since Matter is the solidification of Light—in the same way that the force of the arm cannot have the materiality of the arm opposed to itself: indeed, it can express itself because the latter prompts its movement.

The opposition of materiality asserts itself because of the weakening of the Spirit with respect to its own form, until the very process in which Matter appears devoid of Spirit, opposed to Light: as a reality existing in itself.

Meditation. Matter is fallen and inverted Light. In perceiving-thinking, Light rises again, and the colors and forms of Matter arise from the struggle of Light with Darkness.

Light conquers Darkness in the Will that is realized according to Thought free from the senses.

- *The disciple must imagine this Will as a current of Light flowing in the limbs, independently of the life of the trunk.*

The current of Will flowing in the limbs is the flaming Light that consumes the materiality of the body. Normally, this materiality tends, through desire, to assert itself as nature and to establish itself in the trunk as corporeality independent of Spirit.

The Fire-Light of the Will has the task of continually annihilating the materiality that tends to prevail in the trunk: when it fails to accomplish this task entirely, matter accumulates in the trunk and becomes fat, endowed with an autonomous life.

Fat is the symbol of corporeality that builds itself up, withdrawing from the central current of the Will and developing its own automatic will. In the same way, every arteriosclerotic process is a sign of the weakening of the current of will that permeates the mineral element of the organism: the will loses its natural power over the function of the mineral element, which is the vehicle of the Spirit, according to the cosmic archetype of corporeality.

The initial mineralization of the organism after adulthood becomes a positive process if it is counterbalanced, thanks to ascetic development, by the separation of the forces of feeling from those of will, according to a new balance in the soul, which leaves greater autonomy to the etheric body in the physical organism: autonomy that can be used by the Spirit rather than by the psyche bound to the body. There are people who, thanks to this balance, achieve their maximum psychophysical efficiency after the age of fifty.

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- *Meditation. Light, as the “Light of the world,” is unknown in the Tania. From the Tania, it flows uninterruptedly into the world, lighting up in the predialectical moment of perception and thought.*

The original Light is rekindled as intuitive intuition, intimate coincidence, immediate knowledge, in sensory perception, which

is the moment of the Spirit's identity with the sensible. This identity is in itself supersensible. At the moment when man perceives and thinks, the I enters the world with original forces, immanent but at the same time transcendent: which he will only know after Death, or during life thanks to Initiation.

The disciple meditates on these forces, which the I can draw only from earthly experience, by descending into the darkness of Matter: he begins to understand the secret of repeated earthly lives, or reincarnation, as a profound reality of human destiny.

- *Relating the contemplation of the spiritual Sun to the image, "The light shines in the darkness," the disciple meditates on the mediation of Darkness and its connection with human freedom.*

The original moment of the identity of the ego with the sensible is unconscious and yet dialectically always utilized. Thanks to the utilization of the force that ignores essence, thought becomes determination for the world of quantity. But it is precisely from this determination that the possibility of liberation from any inner obligation arises for modern man.

The free individual act is the ultimate meaning of the process of rationality: a process whose evolutionary function belongs to the present age. The initiation of the new times cannot but have this free act as its fulcrum, which for now presents itself in its darkest form. In fact, it expresses itself exclusively in the sensible, that is, in the sphere of dual opposition: it has no support other than the cerebral, it ignores its original support. Unaware of the source from which it arises, it cannot but be opposed to it, becoming even in thought a vehicle of centripetal desire, which is inseparable from disappointment and pain. Subject to the

sensible support, thought cannot realize its own impulse: it cannot be truly free, since it does not grasp the disappearance of Matter in its manifestation as form, light, color, sound, nor does it grasp the original element that moves it in this spiritualization of Matter. False freedom has the task of preventing the process of disenchantment from the sensible, which the Universe expects from Man.

Initiation into the New Mysteries works through the individual impulse of freedom. The wise instructor takes particular care to nurture the emergence of freedom in the disciple: he establishes with him a relationship of impersonality, in which the highest impulse of love and brotherhood operates thanks to this form. Where the sentient soul takes possession of the relationship, it acts against the disciple's freedom, deteriorating brotherhood. The impulse of freedom must be freed from the sentient support so that its superindividual connection can penetrate the sentient depths. It must be realized in thought free from the senses in order to unite with its own Principle: with the power of identity and synthesis, through which it begins to grasp the world.

The liberation of the inner element from the sensible and the psychic is the Asceticism through which thought realizes its own core of Life, grasping the determination in which it normally loses itself through sensible content. Thanks to the discipline of concentration, thought can live its original power, which knows no duality, in determination.

Thought can experience its own original moment and find in this the germinally accomplished synthesis: it can recognize the realized identity, in the immediate supersensible, of the human with the Divine. Rising to the Principle of synthesis, thought

experiences as a supersensible experience what it normally realizes on the sensible level as determination, with regard to the dimension of quantity, through mathematical-physical thought. This is just the outline of the overcoming of duality, which can only achieve its completeness on the supersensible level. There is no other operator than man, there is no other meaning to man's mission than the Logos.

The reintegration of the Logos into the soul is the meaning of the Initiation of the new times. Through the asceticism of ordinary thinking in accordance with the logic of the sensible, the ascetic can experience as the ultimate instance the perception of the Logos: that is, to realize the original power of identity of thought, the primary relationship, which regularly escapes him, since normal observation is attracted to the sensible product of the relationship, whereby the dual and opposed world arises before him. Usually, scientific observation is simultaneously attracted by the logical and technological products of determination: the ultimate meaning of determination escapes it, which is precisely the experience of its arising as pure relationship.

The Initiation into the New Mysteries prepares the disciple through the asceticism of the very thought from which the science of quantity arises.

The thought that appears most materialized is that which has had the strength to descend most radically into the sensible and to quantize itself, as was not possible for Indian or Far Eastern thought. But it is precisely this materialized thought which, redeemed according to the asceticism pertaining to it—the Way of the new times—brings the resurrecting power of the I. Every movement of liberation of this thought brings about a

transcendent power of Resurrection. As has been shown, it must overcome a state of death in relation to itself.

The disciple can grasp the need to experience the original power of identity if healthy experience leads him to observe in perception the giving of the world beyond quantity, in sounds, lights, forms, colors, etc., in which Matter as dead otherness begins to disappear. This disappearance must be pursued through discipline: first of all, it must be known through an extraordinary act of consciousness.

- *Meditation. The Logos becomes Life: it unifies the Human with the Divine in the Tâima, where the original synthesis operates as immediate thought, in perception. This thought is already immersed in the substance of the world, being the inner content of the sensible.*

It is the immediate predialectical thought present in perception, as in dialectical thinking, the immediate mediation through which man enters into the secret of the world: normally he enters without knowing it, indeed he believes he is outside it, because dialectical consciousness is incapable of perceiving this penetration. He regards being as impenetrable, other, material: while he is already penetrating it by looking at it: by perceiving it, by thinking it. He does not see the immediate thought, the living predialectical thought, the current of pure identity, the subtle life of the unifying Logos, in perceiving and thinking: the inner process of perceiving and thinking, through which the soul emanates

Light into the world. This Light, unseen, dies in the material or sensual vision of the world. From this Death it begins to rise again.

- *Contemplation of Light. The disciple meditates, “Light is invisible. The source of Light is within me.”*

He must not locate this source, even though he knows the flow of the etheric current of Light from the center of the heart. This etheric current sums up the four ethers operating in the sensible world.

- *The disciple contemplates the unrepresentable Archetype of Light as the Force that devours Matter and recreates it according to the original Order. The executive center of the cosmic Force of Light manifests itself in the Universe as the Sun.*
- *The Sun is the symbol of Light. Inner contemplation of the Sun.*

This becomes contemplation of the Midnight Sun, which presupposes meditation on Light, which in turn presupposes the experience of Thought free from the senses, the prerequisite for which is the exercise of right concentration.

Contemplation of the Midnight Sun is accomplished in two stages. In the evening, before falling asleep, the disciple imagines the rising of the Sun at dawn and follows its ascent to the zenith of the sky: he must have a dazzling vision of the midday Sun and be able to fall asleep with this image, conceiving: “I am Light.” In the morning, as soon as he wakes up, he must resume the image of the midday Sun and contemplate its descent towards the horizon until sunset, conceiving: “Light is in me.”

It is useful that such an exercise be performed with the imaginative reinforcement of climbing a mountain, that is, by imagining the ascent from the slopes to the summit in evening

contemplation, and the descent from the summit in morning contemplation: but what really matters for the experimenter is to grasp the supersensible content of the exercise: which is precisely the access to the Threshold of Light of consciousness, usually occurring at the moment of sleep at the price of an interruption of the ordinary processes of consciousness. (In this sense, it is important to penetrate the etheric-cosmic genesis of the exercise, which can be found extensively in the works of R. Steiner, *Spiritual Entities in the Heavenly Bodies and in the Realms of Nature*, ITE, Milan 1939, and *Mysteries of the East and Christianity*, Bocca, Milan 1940).

At this stage of development, the disciple must take care of the details of his material existence that are capable of influencing the progress of the disciplines: in particular, he should be aware of certain ways of behaving outwardly during moments of meditation and concentration.

Practical Methods

The ascetic method proposed here must be able to be carried out in any condition, time, and place, regardless of external circumstances and without any constraints such as the ritual postures of Hindu *asanas*. However, it is useful to remember a few essential rules.

The upright position, standing or sitting, is the most suitable for the exercise of concentration and meditation. Standing should not require effort, because the state of relaxation of the body is an essential factor: perfection in standing should not come from tension, but from the exercise itself, as a consequence of the descent of the currents of the ego, or of the Spirit, along the spine.

This is a dynamic penetration of extra-spatial and extra-temporal forces, which nevertheless acquire spatial value in the vital-physical sphere. The currents of the astral body, which humans share with animals, have a horizontal direction in their fluidic-physical expression—the direction of the animal's spine—while the currents of the ego, or Spirit, have a vertical direction, corresponding to the erect state of the spine. Through asceticism, the upper part of the human astral body, insofar as it is connected with the ego, becomes independent of its animal nature and, as soul, gradually realizes the memory and reality of its spiritual nature.

Normally, in the human interior there is no separation between the lower astral and the higher astral: they are mixed together. The ordinary human being achieves a relative balance

with regard to his instinctive life, or animal nature, at the price of being conditioned by it. When regular, inner discipline achieves the independence of the higher astral from the lower astral: this is the path to control of the instincts. These normally achieve irresistibility as impulses of the lower astral when, according to the "telluric" power from which they originate, they can make the forces of the higher astral their own and dominate thought, to the point of conditioning the ego. In essence, it is the ego that must separate its pure soul vehicle from the area of the soul that resonates according to the physical body: thanks to this separation, the ego can grasp the forces of the soul rooted in the telluric corporeality, which are the most powerful in the magical sense.

The disciple must be able to perform the exercises in any external condition, walking, standing still, sitting, lying down, tied up, with his head down, etc.: but if he wants to get the most out of the exercise, he must observe a few minimal rules, including that of standing upright, but not rigidly, with the torso straight. Only at an advanced stage of development can he resort to a technically prescribed position for operational purposes: supine, with the head raised almost vertically, supported by at least two pillows. In this way, he is at the center of the forces: he can receive the solar currents of the ego and simultaneously work with the lunar currents of the astral body, thus achieving the synthesis that is the basis of the magical opus.

Such a position is especially suitable for exercises concerning the motor will, the dynamization of the currents of the etheric body, and the connection with the Force that has been called the Light of Life.

The aforementioned separation between the higher astral and the lower astral implies on the part of the disciple a responsible presence of the ego in daily experience, more than the ordinary, since the lower astral lacks the stability it normally has thanks to its mixture with the higher astral and the possibility of conditioning it. In reality, the instincts begin to lack their normal 'spiritual nourishment: therefore, unless they are helped by resolute impulses of reintegration, they begin to demand this nourishment with such energy, showing that they are waiting for a moment of diminished surveillance by the ego, in order to unleash themselves with unusual violence. This is why healthy inner development focuses above all on the preventive strengthening of the ego in the sphere where its encounter with the astral reawakens the original forces of the latter in conscious form: the Way of Thought.

In fact, what people normally call the "ego" is not the true ego, but the ego conditioned by the lower astral and expressing a fundamental authority of the instincts, in which ordinary people believe they recognize their own freedom. Hence, the path of ego development is often described as "egoistic," whereas true egoism consists precisely in the absence of such development. Before the birth of the "I," there is no central force in the soul capable of overcoming subjective limitations and immersing itself devotedly in the reality of others, in the reality of the world.

Philosopher's Gold

According to the type of asceticism indicated here, initiation into the perception of Light, at a certain moment, requires the disciple to perform special exercises of concentration-meditation on physical substances, whose inner influence and specific cosmic correlation he comes to experience. He can also intuit their therapeutic virtue.

- *The disciple concentrates on gold: he evokes its perceptible characteristics, its color and light, the forms in which it normally appears, and persists until he feels something like the sense of gold arise within himself: he continues the exercise, meditating on the fact that gold is in reality the mineral residue of the Sun, that is, the earthly trace left by the Sun from the time when it was still united with the Earth. The sense of gold then communicates to him the spiritual power of the Sun: which tends to connect with the heart, because it actually originates from the etheric center of the heart.*

In addition to being a discipline of concentration and meditation, the exercise has a beneficial influence on the etheric-physical organism: in particular, it inspires serenity, courage, and balance of the soul, dispelling the ghosts of desire and fear. It has therapeutic value for the cardiac system.

Meditative concentration on metals is potentially therapeutic: each metal expresses a planetary relationship and a corresponding influence on a bodily organ, i.e., on the vital potential of that organ. However, these correspondences must be rediscovered by

the disciple, or relearned, based on the initiatory teaching of the new times, as they are not found in the traditional heritage, given the changes in signs and influences that have occurred occultly in the modern era.

While meditation on gold can be practiced by the disciple without contraindications, with regard to other metals, however, the guidance of an instructor is advisable. The disciple can generally do without this for a certain part of the path, especially if he benefits from sound spiritual literature. With regard to meditation on metals—excluding gold—the guidance of an instructor begins to be advisable, although not strictly necessary. In fact, only in the case of gold is the correlation with the corresponding organ direct, as the Hermetic experimenters of the philosopher's stone well understood: while for other metals the correlation with the corresponding organ is mediated by the heart, precisely because of the “solar” power of Hermetic or alchemical gold.

Of particular inner power are the forms of concentration-meditation on the four elements, fire, air, water, and earth, each of which responds to a specific system of forces in the human structure: earth = physical body, water = vital or etheric body, air = astral or soul body, fire = ego.

The Apex of Concentration

The discipline of thought does not aim at a power of concentration that is valid merely as such, at the level at which it is produced. At this level, the power of concentration is possible today for anyone who serves any ideology and is capable of obsessive thinking in this sense: not dominated by it, but dominating it. The Obstacle provides strength to the concentration of such thinking, which does not escape from its subjugation to physical nature. The exercise of concentration is in fact a means of overcoming the centripetal force of the psychophysical being that feeds the power of the ego through the dialectical fragmentation of thought, that is, through a process that analytically breaks down the theme of materiality (quantity, economism, finalism of physicality, codification of sensuality) to the point of constituting the iron systematicity of the fragmented: an iron prison of thought.

- *Meditation. In reality, thought must experience concentration solely to overcome the centripetal power that enslaves it to the corporeal nature.*

The purpose of concentration is to free thought from its servitude to the Demon of Matter. Once freed, thought is a force that brings with it a higher type of concentration. Having overcome analytical-Ahriamanic fragmentation, it is already in itself concentration, or synthesis. As such, it is the Light of Will, which as Life of Light actualizes the power of Love of Will. At this level, it is necessary to recognize the moment when the preliminary type of concentration requires a qualitative change.

The maximum strength of concentration is achieved when the intensity of the flow of thought, or of its silence, dominates the soul more than the effort of concentration itself: thus it continues to need concentration only in relation to the lower nature; it does not need effort. Egoic concentration is always necessary to overcome the individual limit: when the sphere of the impersonality of forces is reached, concentration is transformed into contemplation and action.

The power that springs from concentration becomes the means of following the supersensible experience calmly and in a state of metaphysical immobility. In essence, concentration is never interrupted: it is necessary egoistically as an energetic operation of conversion of the Ahrimanic mental, but it continues as an impersonal power of thought in the conscious encounter of the I with the faculties of the soul through various inner experiences.

At a certain moment, the disciple's life becomes entirely a state of offering to the supersensible, and therefore of deep concentration. The ego essentially brings absolute contemplative concentration, which is its power of identity with the world, emerging in immediate perception and immediate thinking.

The disciple's life becomes a continuous concentration, which must, however, leave ample room for self-abandonment to normal existential necessity and spontaneity. Normal existential necessity is the immediate material of the inner work and at the same time an experimental school. The disciple's sagacity, in periods of intense action and difficulty, will lead him to make these a vehicle for the Spiritual. Through essential concentration, he will bring about a personal connection between the human flow of events and their cosmic reason. He will act with the

utmost dedication to the world, remaining intimately connected with the secret reality of events, as their cosmic source: the Logos.

* * *

The concentration which the disciple calls upon in relation to certain limits that sometimes present themselves as dramatically insurmountable must become—as has been mentioned—a central power of continuity, capable of operating beyond the psychic domain: it must attain absolute intensity, without however becoming something fixed, but rather animating the totality of consciousness, which in turn, bearing witness to it, gives it life. This giving of life belongs to the higher Self, which in effect can only emerge unseen.

- *The disciple contemplates within himself a mystical Sun, symbol of all strength and invincibility. He can realize the intensity he has attained when he feels every movement of the psyche disappear, as if reabsorbed by the virtue of this Sun. (In effect, there are no external difficulties, but rather tensions of the psyche covering human dramas).*

The adamantine center of light, intimately enlivened, acquires, beyond these tensions, a power of magical objectivity, which is the power of impersonality of the Higher Self, emerging by contemplative virtue from the depths of the soul. This Sun should not be visualized or located at any point, but accepted where it presents itself: which is not a “where,” but an unlocatable metaphysical state, unlike the astral and etheric centers recognizable in the bodily points where it specifically operates.

When the metaphysical life of feeling can resonate with the core of Light, feeling is transformed into a subtle organ of

distinction between error and truth and therefore of moral intuition, coinciding with the pure motion of thought. It is the end of Lucifer's deception, by virtue of which good or evil are the subjective, and therefore deceptive, positions of reality. Human knowledge regains the essence of which it had been deprived.

From the harmony of feeling with the core of Light, a communion with the Divine also arises as a certainty, which is the emergence of the original identity. Certainty and communion become a single inner state. In such conditions, in reality, the disciple regains, through the forces of self-awareness, the faith that "moves mountains." A Power, to which nothing is impossible, flows into him if, in contemplative concentration, he is capable of the impersonality and dedication peculiar to the authentic Self.

He can ask everything of a Power that can do everything, but it demands conscious adherence to the rules of its manifestation. In essence, concentration, meditation, and the achievements of Asceticism work to make the disciple his own these rules: inasmuch as he has to realize through that Power the real nature of the Self, beyond what is its everyday parody. In reality, the everyday ego derives its inner reason for being precisely from the deprivation of its own Light of Life.

- *Meditation on the Higher Self. "It is in motion, It is motionless. It is far away, It is simultaneously near. It is within everything that is, It is outside everything that is"* (*Isha Upanishad*, 5).

Contemplating identity with the Higher Self can help us understand the real fiction of the identity of the ego, which is daily denied by modern man in his perception and thinking. The

Higher Self is at the boundaries of the everyday ego and is at the same time the intimate virtue of its identity with the world.

Contemplation of identity generates the idea of deep meditation as an elevation to prayer, thanks to which humans can turn genuinely, free of recitations, to the Divine, and the Divine cannot fail to respond with its unlimited gift to humans. At that moment, identity is not only contemplated but also realized as the certainty of the supersensible event that transforms the sensible. This event is continuous, in everything; perceiving it is the preparatory exercise for prayer as a magical force.

In reality, prayer is possible for human beings at every stage of development, from the stage of just becoming aware of subjective limitations to the stage of deep concentration. In essence, when deep concentration is achieved, it is a higher state of prayer, without words: it cannot but be continuous, just as the motion of creation is continuous. Prayer at this level is the offering of the soul, which may be accompanied by a request for a guiding presence, or for the healing or relief of suffering beings, or for the intervention of the Spiritual World in problematic human situations. Such prayer is realized with the certainty of a positive response from the Spiritual World. The disciple can ask this of the Force to which nothing is impossible: already in turning to It, he feels himself heard, by virtue of the spirit of identity with the Logos, from which he moves.

Sex and Asceticism

Beyond the contemplative imagination of the Higher Self, progress is only possible for the disciple in relation to the disenchantment of the dominion of *eros*.

Normally, the force of eros is identical to the force of desire. In reality, it is permeated with desire; if it were freed from this, it would reveal itself as the original current of Life of Light. The art of the disciple is to work indirectly on desire, which ordinarily manifests itself insofar as the psyche is already enveloped in it.

- Meditation. *In the etheric-physical sphere, sex is chaste; desire belongs to the astral body. The astral body is pure in itself, substantialized by Light, but it is altered by its involvement with etheric-physical corporeality: unconscious of its own Light of Life, it tends to make the Life of Light of the etheric-physical organism its own. In plants, etheric-physical Life lives in its pure state, without the inherent nature of its astral body: it works from “outside” on the plant, according to an astral-divine pattern: in the flower, in its innermost chalice, it penetrates in spring through the sunlight, for a temporary fertilizing action, which is absolutely chaste.*

Through the image of the flower's calyx and its communion with Light, the chastity of the current of Eros, unspoiled by desire, is given to the disciple's consciousness as a perception.

The current of Eros, uncorrupted by desire, as an original Force, is the most powerful force operating in the human being. It is in fact the cosmic power of Love which, through

physiological structures, becomes on Earth the force of reproduction of the human species, as well as of the animal species, adapting itself to the series of constraints of the sentient-instinctive sphere. It expresses its maximum potential in man, but on condition that he submits to the impulses of animal nature and eliminates the consciousness of the ego each time.

When the same force expresses itself as love of the soul, it does not cease to be dominated by the impulses of animal nature: on the soul level, it continues to be manipulated by them, despite idealizations and sublimations. The astral body is incapable of realizing its original force, which is the force of love, because it ignores it and draws it from where it has already become desire. The difficulty of the force of eros in expressing its pure essence, independent of the impulses of desire, lies in the fact that through these impulses, operating at the level of nature, it manifests its maximum power, eliminating higher consciousness: it cannot achieve the same culmination as pure power of the soul, since the soul is conditioned by the bodily support necessary for self-consciousness.

The experimenter knows that, if it is true that the power of initiatory Love, or Sacred Love, is the conscious conquest of the power of eros normally experienced as desire and through the channels of animal nature, he also knows that initiatory Love cannot arise through operations on sex, but must awaken independently of it in order to operate on it. The deceptions and consequent disasters in this regard depend on believing in the easy operative methods promised by modern sexual "spagurries," whereby the sex-dominated man presumes to act on sex.

Contemplation of the pineal process of reproduction in the calyx of the flower can enable the disciple to understand how the

sexual act is potentially a process of the etheric-physical bodies, independent of the astral body, whose true joy is in reality metaphysical. Realizing joy as metaphysical content, the astral body realizes its true nature and its true movement, which is identity with the astral body of the other: an identity that is not dominated but dominates the sentient body, by virtue of the reawakened original androgynous power, whereby the masculine element of each of the two astral bodies unites with the feminine element of the other (see p. 113 - XVI Eros and Imagination).

In reality, the pure power of eros, as recalled by the tantric image of the Kundalini, is the very current of the Life of Light. In the “Platonic” ignition of eros, it is energized by the feeling of love, whereby the element of the original, or Edenic, harmony of the couple emerges unconsciously in the soul, the correspondence of the androgynous polarities of the astral body and the virtue of the pure conjunction of the etheric bodies. In this union, the order of the ethers of the four elements is revived according to a power of rebuilding the original lost Bliss. This is always the unknown animator of the etheric body of the member of the couple who experiences the spontaneous, and in a certain sense “fatal,” experience of “falling in love.” But this possibility lacks the element of power that nature fully realizes on the animal level, due to the fact that the astral heat of the Will explodes totally in humans through voluptuous desire.

In reality, the power of the dazzling union belongs to the astral body, which, however, lacking awareness of its own Light, eagerly seeks it in the physical sphere, altering the purity of the relationship between the etheric and physical bodies and depending on this alteration when it tends to realize its own union of Light. The soul experience of love, on the other hand,

can make the dazzling union its own, thanks to its absolute independence from the union of physical bodies, which must take place according to an autonomy that stimulates the secret angelic nature of the etheric body, which is in itself devoid of desire and passion. Desire and passion, in fact, belong to the astral body, not to the etheric-physical body.

Access to the secret of modern “spagyria,” or Sacred Love, is prepared by the ascetic path aimed at animating pure Heat or pure Fire of the Will: which is the highest, and therefore organically deepest, presence of that Life of Light, to which the disciple turns through the Way of Thought. The operations of Light, concentration, and meditative contemplation prepare the etheric expression of the Higher Self, that is, of the Principle that carries within itself the ultimate meaning of man's earthly experience.

In the soul “fire” of “falling in love,” the germ of the entire Work is present, operating in a state of embryonality and spontaneity. This “fire” is actually a gift: therefore, it must be conquered. It can be glimpsed and brought to growth, until the manifestation of its original force, thanks to a virtue that is not conditioned by the Powers dominating its animal expression, but drawn from the Love itself from which it moves. This is what must be asked of what is already being given: not the impulse with which it identifies itself as grasped by those Powers. The human error is not to see the source of Love, not to unite the current of Will with it.

Through spagyric practice, the experimenter can encounter the current of the Holy Grail if he understands that all Asceticism leads him to move consciously according to the impulse of Love from which he already moves, but which he does not see: he is

accustomed to seeing only the products or sensations of Love, where it is already grasped by the Obstacles. There is no joy in eros that is not dominated by the Obstacles, so the return to the source is always a path of pain. Pain tends to lead back to pure connection, but it is not understood; it is accompanied by aversion, dissent, and illusory divergence, so that each time one doubts the Love whose eternity was just moments before believed to be eternal.

The human couple can achieve the movement of the Supernatural in Love that is not grasped by Nature, but will therefore dominate Nature, making sex once again the vehicle of the Supernatural, according to the path of the Grail or conscious ecstasy. Through the impetus of Love, it can turn to the force from which Love springs uncontaminated: but this requires a transcendence of self on both sides, a radical mutual offering, capable of bringing to life the power that only Nature is currently capable of manifesting with the utmost intensity.

There is an ascetic secret, inhinderable by love: it can be sensed in meditation directed toward the generative process in the chalice of the flower: Sacred Love is the pure fabric of the astral body, which does not need sex to find itself in the astral body of another. Its androgynous structure makes it directly identifiable with the androgynous entity of the other: it has the power to find itself there, through the direct virtue of its Supernatural, which is the cosmic nature of Love: whose ignition allows the etheric-physical bodies to unite virginally, according to their autonomous correlation, which is original etheric, or angelic, correlation: without the intervention of the astral body.

The Supernatural already lives in the Love of the human couple, even when they are not aware of their cosmic mission.

There is no couple in which such a mission does not emerge, even if only for a brief moment, as a possibility, which is normally ignored. The initiatory couple becomes aware of this possibility and tends to realize it.

Every human couple is potentially an initiatory couple: it has its gift of transcendence in the moment when it feels the bliss of giving itself to the other and is capable of feeling eternity in that instant. Such a moment is normal for every couple, whether or not they are aware of their transcendent assumption. When the unknown possibility of Sopranahira emerges, this moment becomes part of time. Ordinarily, it always disappears into the unconscious realm of forgetfulness, until it seems like an illusory or unreal content, but its truth and reality remain in the soul as a creative seed. It is only forgotten or hidden: through love, it can be rediscovered.

The experimenter, as a disciple of the Grail, knows that this moment, once rediscovered, leads to eternity. The Will can encounter the Supernatural in the evocation of the profound, essential motion with which, as individual will, it moves each time.

- *Meditation. In reality, what moves the Will from its essence is Love. Every act of Will in man is an individual movement of Divine Love.*
- *The disciple can make such an insight the greatest strength of his asceticism, because the Will is the current of Life that he continually, daily, uses without knowing its magical nature.*

In the current of the Will, the cosmic current of Love flows unbeknownst to us. He will begin to understand asceticism as the art of harmonizing the current of the Will with its object through Thought. There is nothing that should not be willed by the Will, which is Love in itself. The force of Will with which a being wields a weapon to hurt another being is the same with which he can offer help: it is the force of Love that can be used against its real object. In this contradiction lies the secret of human freedom. Responsibility for the Will is an achievement of knowledge: therefore, the initial task of the disciplines is to liberate Thought.

- *Meditation. The disciple animates within himself the following image: “Through its eras and transformations, the Earth is on its way to becoming the Cosmos of Love.” The entire history of the Earth and of man tends toward this goal.*

The carbon of the Earth becomes diamond. The diamond returns to adamantine Light.

It is evident that the path to the liberation of *eros* is a process of the Will, desired where Thought, as the vehicle of the I, does not alter itself but is itself the Light of Life. The real obstacle to the circulation of Light is *eros*, which enslaves it to the heat of desire: to the heat of the Will deprived of its volitional being.

The Center of the Force

Perception and thought carry in their immediacy the power of identity of the ego with the world. This power, continually used and yet unknown, can be known by the disciple as a primordial element of Life—which is Life of Light—in pure thought, in pure perception.

This indicates a conscious experience of reintegration, possible for the truly modern seeker: a volitional operation of reconnection with the essence of things, that is, with what the original Deities appropriated, depriving human thought of it but granting it as an extra-individual conquest, on condition that it conform to their rules and not appeal to an individual ego. In the pre-dialectical moment of perception and thought, as has been shown, the modern experimenter can rediscover the essence, insofar as he withdraws from the ancient inner subjection to the Deities that dominate thought separated from essence. He can carry out an operation of liberation of the essence within himself through an autonomous act of will, to which the force of the Higher Self responds, gradually orienting the disciple from the human to the Superhuman, toward the threshold of the New Mysteries.

At the point where the ego meets the astral body, for perception and thought, the primordial cosmic heat is rekindled each time as a supersensible process of Light, or essence. This rekindling is normally ignored by people with mere dialectical consciousness: in reality, while they use it, they oppose it, because they tenaciously tend to receive warmth from their instincts, which is the same warmth that enslaves animal life. He actually

enjoys the pine Light Heat unconsciously as the power of the ego's identity with things or with the movements of the soul.

The disciple turns to the experience of Light Heat in the etheric center of the heart. He knows that this Light Heat cannot be awakened by mystical emotionalism, which is inevitably linked to corporeality.

The perception of Light is the first form of reintegration of Thought as Light. The disciple must now conduct the experience through an extracorporeal support that is nevertheless internal to corporeality, which is the etheric body, or "subtle body," *Unga sharira*, the first fabric of Light, which he is given to perceive objectively.

He realizes the first center of the etheric currents in the head, at an internal point located between the epiphysis and the pituitary gland. These two glands are respectively vehicles of confluence of two essential etheric currents, normally in opposition to each other and harmonizing only in the pre-dialectical act of perception and in moments of knowledge, or of impersonal perception of truths.

Through asceticism, the disciple must be able to prepare the harmonization of the two currents. In passing, it may be mentioned that every form of neurosis or psychosis can be traced back to the intensification of the contrast between the two currents: the mental-egoic and the cardiac-cosmic.

Any attempt to awaken this center before the harmonization of the two etheric currents can produce serious psychic disturbances and compromise future inner work. The harmonization of the two currents is the result of high morality, unlimited self-denial, and a state of patience and understanding,

but also of loving harmony towards all beings, including above all those who appear to be the producers of human evil. Thanks to this harmonization, the physical body tends to receive life-giving warmth from the divine astral, rather than from the animal astral or from the instincts flowing in the blood.

The animation of the etheric center of the head must proceed according to the theme of Light. Light is now Thought ceasing to be reflected light. For the modern disciple, the center of the etheric currents must move from the head: it must first awaken in the seat where he realizes waking consciousness, which allows him the initial process of liberation of Thought through concentration.

The ultimate meaning of concentration is, for the experimenter, to rediscover the supersensible current of Life from which Thought arises. If he had the possibility of moving the etheric body, or subtle body, or vital body, without possessing the original element of thought, which is constantly at work through the higher centers of consciousness, that is, without independence from the impulses of the psyche, he would destroy the subtle body. For now, he destroys the part of it through which he thinks. Through dialectical thinking, man continually deteriorates the etheric body that enables him to think.

Irregular inner experiences, whether psychic or mediumistic, cannot prevent the transmission to the etheric body of the impulses that the astral body carries because of its subjection to psychophysiological nature. The ascetic cannot arrive at a real experience of the Life Body as long as he suffers this subjection, which is, moreover, the normal human condition: a condition of error, evil, and pain, from which man laboriously attempts to free himself: illusorily, until he possesses Thought as the key to Life:

which is etheric Life, the deprivation of which not only causes him to suffer the tensions of desire, but also prevents him from discovering in subjection the source of desire and in this the very desire for subjection.

* * *

When, thanks to contemplative concentration, thought ceases to be dialectical and possesses the flow of its own Light, this flow can be made to converge towards the aforementioned center located between the pituitary and pineal glands.

The operation requires absolute silence, not only internal but also external. While the normal exercise of concentration can be performed even in a noisy environment and despite unfavorable conditions — indeed, it can through these conditions appeal to more intense inner forces — concentration on the etheric point between the pineal and pituitary glands requires absolute independence from the external environment: a noise or interruption could be fatal. Before beginning the operation, the disciple must ensure that the environment strictly meets the requirements.

The initial theme of the Light exercise is the final one of the Sun imagination: “The Light in me,” which summarizes the previous Light imaginations, from “The Light shines in the darkness” to the contemplation of the “Midnight Sun.”

Through the etheric center of the head, the disciple enters a zone of inner security, because he is at the point where maximum autonomy with respect to himself corresponds to maximum openness to the Spiritual World. Maximum authority over what is lower nature is identified with maximum dependence on the

Logos, or on the divine *Siwkti*. This dependence is an achievement of the truly free Will.

In this center, the operation of Light, called *Operatio Solis*, realizes the initial presence of the I as the Principle of Light. This presence, as an enhancement of the waking state, is the guarantee of the regularity of experience: the absolute opposite of a mediumistic condition.

The cosmic Principle of the I is the Force that actually harmonizes the two fundamental etheric currents of the psychophysical organism, which normally contrast with each other because of the dialectical, or reflected, consciousness that draws on and at the same time opposes its own Light. Harmonization transforms mental knowledge into supramental, or imaginative, knowledge, making imagination an instrument of higher, or divine, Magic. This is granted by the Spiritual World to the extent that the disciple achieves the ability to use the Force in an absolutely impersonal way.

In the etheric center of the head, the disciple realizes the flow of the *Kundalini* current, which has already risen from the depths constitutionally. His art is to descend into the depths, in a motion opposite to that of the tantric techniques, whose purpose is a deep operation aimed at awakening the current of Light Heat from the lowest center. The reality is that a certain type of ascetic has incarnated in Western humanity—certainly not a majority—endowed with the activity of the higher centers of waking consciousness, precisely because they achieved the awakening of the Kundalini in a previous existence. This awakening has essentially reincarnated as the power of Self-Consciousness, that is, as the conscious power of the bearers of the Ego, as thinkers or scientists. The fall into materialism is nothing more than a

temporary deviation from this supersensible possibility. However, overcoming the materialistic deviation cannot be a gratuitous or fatal event. It is the ultimate test of human freedom: that is, the need for an initiatory solution to the current crisis of civilization.

The ascetic of the new age recaptures the *Kundalini* current in the center of the etheric currents of the head, in order to bring it back into the depths. In the original (Atlantean) human type, the current moves from the heart; in the post-Atlantean human type, it is centered at the base of the spine, and the task of the proto-ascetic is to reawaken it from this depth so that it may ascend to the head. In the modern human type, the center is in the head, but imperceptible to the consciousness that is formed through cerebral activity: the task of the ascetic is to realize it beyond the cerebral screen, to bring it back to the seat of the heart: where it already is metaphysically, having never ceased to be. In the center of the heart, the superhuman germ of the etheric currents that connect man with the real Cosmos, or etheric Cosmos, has remained in a latent state since the time of the “fall.” Once the etheric center of the heart has been awakened, the dominion of the etheric currents is assured by their return to their higher seat, which an ancient Taoist tradition rightly calls the “heavenly heart,” according to a process of reintegration, which will be mentioned in two paragraphs.

The measurable physical Cosmos is to the immeasurable etheric Cosmos as clothes are to the person who wears them. No physical measurement, no spatial investigation can grasp the realities of the Cosmos. The Initiate realizes in advance what will be a natural spiritual process for humanity in the future: the work of the Initiate is metaphysically necessary in order to open the way to the redemption of humanity. If this way were not opened,

if the free and sacrificial act of the Initiate were missing, humanity as a collective, in order not to risk losing the “human state,” that is, the possibility of regaining the original state prior to the Fall, would have to go through collective catastrophes and crises, the outcome of which could, however, be negative, depending in any case on the *actual* content of the action of the human mediators of the Spiritual.

The possibility of restricting the state prior to the Fall is linked to the fact that the Initiate does not deviate, but brings about the awakening of the center of the etheric currents in the head through the forces of waking consciousness developed thanks to the Fall and the consequent binding of the soul to the brain structures. Therefore, the initiatory work of the disciple is a work of brotherhood, which makes its way forward, sacrificially but invincibly overcoming human dissensions.

When it is mastered in the head, with the feeling corresponding to the image “The Light is in me,” the etheric center is temporarily transferred to the larynx through the image “The Light becomes Life in me” and from the larynx to the heart through the image “The Life of the Light becomes Love in me.” The light of the etheric center of the head becomes the power of Life in the center of the larynx: the Life of Light becomes the Warmth of Love in the center of the heart.

From this moment on, the disciple ceases to receive warmth from the instincts. With regard to the movement of the instincts, his blood becomes “cold”: he can receive warmth only from supersensible activity. In the Tradition, the symbols of this phase are the snake and the fish, cold-blooded animals. A degree of Chaldean Initiation is called “the Serpent.” Thus, some modern esotericists rightly call the attainment of independence from sex

“the cold magical virtue,” which does not exclude sex, but rather requires the process of sex, insofar as it becomes a vehicle for the depth of the supersensible forces that it normally enslaves to itself: the ultimate meaning of the awakening of *Kundalini*.

The Ego and the Center of Force

From the moment he begins to identify the preliminary center of the etheric forces in the head, the disciple can act through the etheric center of the Will located in the solar plexus. He initially resorts to it by means of the breath, to the extent that he has achieved the confidence to move in the breath through “thought free from the senses.” This center does not require concentration, tension, or effort, but only the evocation of the transcendent stillness of the Hierarchies and of the Power that radiates mightily in the Cosmos through this stillness. The Power with which the Hierarchies move the worlds becomes human Will on Earth. This Will can be perceived by the ascetic through the center of the solar plexus, where all the force is gathered. Undoubtedly, the breath is called upon to act etherically in this operation, but it must be autonomous breath, moved not by the physical body but by the subtle body.

In the center of the solar plexus, the disciple performs a fundamental operation from the point of view of magical asceticism: the separation of Will from Feeling. In this center, he evokes the cosmic current of Will emanating from the Thrones: he unites with pure Will, independent of Luciferic feeling, thereby freeing emotional life from the pressure of the instincts. The contradiction and disorder that characterize emotional life depend on its being always inseparable from the process of the instincts. Through the organ of the Will, or etheric center of the solar plexus, the disciple animates the forward current of the Will, to which he initially assigns, in the vehicle of the breath, a positive autonomy: that which pertains to the metabolic

processes, due to their unfolding independent of waking consciousness. If the breath is identified in the slightest way with its own physical flow, the operation is not only useless but harmful.

The disciple enters the zone of magical Will, whose Power is granted by the Spiritual World in relation to the independence he has achieved from his lower nature, down to the radical etheric structures. It is the same zone in which Power can instead be given by the infernal Powers to those who have achieved development by enslaving their spiritual forces to their lower nature: a phenomenon already in progress, which in the near future will take on alarming proportions: teachers will appear who will seem to justify their spiritual mission, inasmuch as they are actually endowed with supernormal powers. Their irregularity can be seen above all in the fact that they cannot help but show off and insist on being identified as authors of miracles.

The etheric organ of the Will is prepared by means of the concentration exercises already mentioned.

There is no exercise of concentration that is not an exercise of the Will. For the purpose of forming the solar plexus organ, however, it is necessary to develop an essential Will capable of dominating the lower element that intervenes with increasing subtlety in magical development, and thus to constitute a secure safeguard against the various assaults of the lower nahira: craving, fear, anguish, aversion, obsessive psychism, mediumistic inclination, etc.

- *The disciple meditates on the Will. He sees it petrified in the mineral kingdom and realizes that this kingdom is a world of solidified Will. In relation to this solidification,*

the Power of the Will is in its pure state, or of absolute incorporeality. The disciple must grasp the negative of minerality as a transcendent state of the Will. This Will renounces its transcendence, manifesting itself in the living. It moves the plant from within, annihilating the mineral state and enslaving it to its own architecture, raising its form upward, overcoming the force of gravity. It becomes a driving force in animals. Every expression of animal life, as an instinctive process, is essentially movement: the Will manifests itself by adapting to animal nature, but in such conditions it dominates corporeality. In humans, it is likewise bound to animal nature, but it expresses the presence of its own Principle, the Ego. Thanks to this presence, the Will expresses itself as Thought. In humans, the current of the Will can draw on its own source, by virtue of Thought.

The cosmic Power that moves the worlds becomes the individual power of the Will through humans on Earth.

* * *

The ego has its center of consciousness in the head because it achieves the individual power of autonomy and centrality by connecting with the mineral element of the Earth at a particular point in the head that is difficult to recognize based on its physiological appearance.

The center of gravity of the ego in human beings of this time is usually located in the head, but this location is temporary for the disciple. In the head, the ego, as the principle of freedom and selfhood, is determined and becomes an individual impulse through the support of the calcareous concretions of the pineal

gland. The cosmic ego, in order to become an individual ego, needs the calcareous element of the pineal gland: without this mineral support, the individual is normally psychically abnormal.

But the center of consciousness, which in modern man is necessarily formed first in the head, does not coincide with the center of gravity of the inner man, where the cosmic forces that operate structurally in the body and are imperceptible to his ordinary consciousness converge. This center is the heart, the deepest and most difficult to reach. In fact, there is a physical heart, with an etheric heart, an astral heart, and a spiritual heart inside it. The spiritual heart is the Divine in man.

The ego acquires forces of self-consciousness in the human being through the mineral particles of the pineal body: through these particles, it achieves its earthly individuation and the conquest of freedom in the sensible sphere. Its dominion begins in the head through the etheric center located between the pineal and pituitary glands: it descends into the depths of the soul-physical organization through another essential center in the heart and another in the abdomen that presides over the basic dynamics of the will.

But the true center of strength is not in the head system, nor in the abdominal system: the ascetic achieves radical domination of these two systems and their equilibrium to the extent that he penetrates the spiritual domain of the heart. Every dynamic action that the ego manages to bring about through the vital center of the abdomen implies the presence of the ego in the center of the heart, inasmuch as it is the center where the vital currents are dominated by their superhuman Principle. In the heart, the human and the superhuman are united according to a dynamis imperceptible to ordinary consciousness.

Access to the spiritual domain of the heart is achieved through the asceticism of the Light of Life. Every vital power is mediated by the center of force in the abdomen, but what dominates this center essentially moves from the heart. When the ascetic achieves a harmonious agreement between the head system and the abdominal system, he is essentially opening the way to the heart for himself: but in reality, he is already moving metaphysically from the essence of the heart.

Undoubtedly, the weakness of modern man is his being centered in the head system, but this is an inevitable starting point for the consciousness of the ego, which must initially be mental consciousness. To overcome the head system is to connect with the forces of the ego that begin to manifest themselves in that system: it is these forces that have the power to descend into the depths, because they move from a Principle that possesses depth. What is important is not so much descending into the vital depths to conquer them, as connecting with the ego that overcomes the astral reflected consciousness, and yet is the bearer of the power of depth which, through the organ of the will in the solar plexus, brings about the balance of the forces within man.

The head-man of today is the weakest, but the most conscious. This clear consciousness is a precious asset that the disciple must not renounce: all human transformations, including his descent into materialism, have had as their goal the conquest of this clear consciousness. The spiritual path consists not in going backward, but in going forward, understanding the real meaning of the conquest of autonomous consciousness: what it further demands of itself. The task is precisely to penetrate, thanks to this lucid consciousness, into the sphere of the organizing forces of corporeality: which are the highest. In this

sphere, man once penetrated by retreating to the original states of consciousness, pre-individual and requiring the condition of dream or ecstasy: today he must penetrate through the forces of Self-Consciousness, awakened thanks to the descent into the one-dimensional sensory experience. The evil of such an experience is that it is deprived of its true meaning, rejected in the name of the past, whereas it is precisely this experience that brings the forces of the future.

Self-consciousness must connect with the forces of depth in the abdomen and reestablish the balance that opens the passage to the highest center of depth, which is in the heart. But the ultimate meaning of this conquest of depth, in the finito, will be the restoration of the dominion of the head, by virtue of the rekindling of the Light of the “frontal eye,” or “eye of Shiva.” The loss of this “eye” cost Lucifer the necessity of seducing man through knowledge devoid of the original Light. Man, through the forces of Self-Consciousness, has the task of regaining the original Light, that is, the essence. The ascetic of this time must understand what forces must flourish from the experience of the lowest level of knowledge.

- *At the point inside the forehead, between the eyebrows, the disciple evokes the “I am” as transcendent Self-Consciousness, the fulcrum from which the whole Work moves. The immanence of this self-affirmation achieves the maximum of its transcendence, where it essentially expresses the “Not I, but Christ in me.” The disciple perceives himself at the center of himself, an instrument of the Light of the Logos, that is, of the incarnation of the Superhuman in the human.*

Techniques of the Will

In order to face the difficulties of the age, the intensification of darkness, psychic chaos, and the attack of the Obstacle-makers, to whom the human mind has unconsciously opened the way, in order to gather strength and form an unalterable flow capable of sustaining the wavering, overcoming moments of tension, and rediscovering momentum beyond the trials faced, it is essential to establish an autonomous zone of Will in the soul. This zone must be prepared with wisdom.

The Asceticism of Thought, mentioned above, is the prerequisite. Every exercise of Thought is essentially an exercise of Will. Will is strengthened to the extent that it is in harmony with Thought. Every act, gesture, or action that embodies a conscious thought strengthens the Will. Indeed, those who predetermine tasks for themselves and carry them out with rigorous consistency strengthen the Will.

The disciple cultivates the development of an autonomous current of Will, on which he can rely in moments when he urgently needs independence from his overwhelming psyche. He achieves this by persistently performing certain acts of autonomous Will: a calm, impersonal, tenacious persistence that continually resumes the inner movement, regardless of failures, interference, or interruptions.

A fundamental exercise for developing the objective strength of the Will is to imagine the volitional current flowing through the limbs, as mentioned on page 64. This exercise must be dynamized to the point of contemplating the flowing force of the

Will in the legs for walking or running, as a current recognizable by its having nothing to do with the other systems of the organism, in particular with the trunk: as a current that comes directly from the Cosmos. In reality, it comes from the Cosmos, without passing through the nervous system, except *a posteriori*. The nervous system perceives it as a result of movement, the perception of which is so simultaneous with it that physiologists believe it is produced by the so-called motor nerves. These are actually sensory nerves and are responsible for providing the sensation of movement: there are no motor nerves.

The current of the Will comes directly from the Cosmos: ordinary human beings perceive only its post-corporeal manifestations through the nervous system: they perceive only a secondary process. Those who realize the pre-corporeal moment of the Will—imaginative asceticism is the prerequisite for such realization—perceive an impersonal force that ignores the evil of the psyche. This is the meaning of the imagination of the motor Will: in it, the disciple has the initial perception of the magical Will.

The independence of the current of Will flowing in the legs must be felt above all as independence from the trunk, in particular from the spine. This independence must imaginatively become something precise, like an objective perception.

- *The disciple who is familiar with the imagination of the motor Will can try the following exercise. Sitting normally, he mentally contemplates his immobile legs. After a few minutes, when he becomes aware of a subtle perception of his limbs, he imagines them moving, evoking the motor current of the Will independent of the*

trunk. It is as if he were moving his inner legs in relation to his perfectly immobile physical legs.

This exercise confers a dynamic autonomy of the volitional current of the I in relation to the psyche. The volitional current is essentially the dynamic current of the Spirit (Logos) that penetrates the human being. Taking into account the rules regarding body postures for meditation, disciples who have already mastered the exercise of concentration can benefit from the body position recommended for the operative techniques (see page 72 - Chapter IX Practical Methods) for the contemplation of the Will.

* * *

Faced with any overwhelming situation, physical or psychological, where he recognizes it as necessary, the disciple can realize absolute elusiveness as a possibility of the Will to manifest the I directly. In essence, the real inner subject, articulating itself in the Will, which is its immediate vehicle, cannot be involved in discomfort because it is essentially free from it. In ordinary human beings, the inner subject cannot be aware of its own volitional element, because this is not perceptible; it eludes the nervous system, which perceives only its manifestations. The volitional element is neither psychic nor dialectical: therefore, the subject cannot articulate it against malaise: it identifies with it, so as to suffer it, until the crisis that prompts the basic organic forces to heal, but at the price of their wear and tear. The physical body always ends up being the “scapegoat” for the errors of the psyche.

The technique of elusiveness is as follows. Normally, malaise gains strength from the unconscious and intense opposition of the subject to it: in this opposition, the volitional being is itself

necessitated by the malaise. It is necessary to remove the opposition, not to oppose anything.

- *Let the malaise be what it is: something foreign, from which even the slightest tension is suddenly removed. In response, the force that cannot be attacked by the malaise responds from the depths of the soul as the power of impersonality, called back into the empty space that has been created.*

With the positive cessation of opposition to the malaise, a release is achieved, that is, an autonomous act, which has the task of continuing itself, as a vehicle of the ego, that is, as a vehicle of the elusiveness of the inner being, which is the being of the Will. The elusiveness is not a selfish attitude, nor is it out of the ordinary, because it expresses the real nature of the inner being; which the disciple has the task of using no differently than the physical being uses the instruments of sensory investigation.

Elusiveness is essentially the way of being of the ego, which immerses itself in the profound nature of things while remaining identical to itself. The maximum of its strength is impersonality. The following exercise is aimed at making the volitional element of the ego directly effective.

- *The disciple imagines the physical body as a sheath in which he, as a soul being, inserts himself until he feels complete: until he feels the physical body as a perfectly fitting garment in which he moves with ease and autonomy, perceiving himself as concretely incarnated, not imprisoned in the sheath, but harmoniously mobile within it and, above all, capable of unlimited rest.*

This image, in the event of physical discomfort or psychological impediments, can be repeated several times until it translates into a feeling of autonomy with respect to the difficulty in question. As an exercise, it is especially useful in the morning, immediately after waking up. In addition to being an exercise of the Will, it is important as a therapeutic action for any type of illness, psychological or physical.

The Will can be considered truly strengthened, to the instinctive level, when it can provide independence from the series of personal impulses and practically translate into a feeling of understanding of the various forms of human error, from the misrepresentation of truth to the pretense of justice. It must be able to arouse in the experimenter a state of detachment and indulgence towards the psychic fabrications of error or the dramatic recitations of the ego: corresponding to the level from which he works to raise the human.

* * *

Particularly strengthening for the Will is the imagination of the configuration of one's own skin: essentially connected with the previous exercise.

- *The disciple exercises himself in feeling the shape of his own skin, the boundaries of his physical body: he forms a complete image of the surface of his skin, until he perceives it as a single entity. When this image becomes alive to him, he can feel the presence of the cosmic Will in the form of his skin.*

In reality, where physicality ends, the life of the true spiritual body “begins.” This is reflected in the physical body: it is the

reflected self, the reflected psyche. Furthermore, although it is embedded in the physical body, moves within the physical organism, and is indeed its foundation, by becoming architectural motion of the body, it adapts to the laws of animal nature and becomes alienated: therefore, it does not completely dominate that nature. If it dominated it, the physical body would not suffer illness or death. The disciple reaches the point of urging, at the limits of the physical body, the spiritual body free from physicality and urgent within it.

Eros and Imagination

The imagination of the form of one's own skin also stimulates the forces of magical will and has therapeutic value. It begins to form part of pre-initiatory asceticism, insofar as it evokes, at the supersensible periphery of the body, the current of the ego capable of rectifying the illusory psychic image of corporeality and its unconscious sexual counter-image.

Unconsciously subjected to the power of this counter-image, human beings normally experience, through their bodily appearance, the subjective drama of sex and project it as objective into the world. Those who know the symbolism of the two Obstacle-bearers, Lucifer and Ahriman, can understand how, with regard to sexual configuration, the etheric image is Luciferic and its counter-image Ahrimanic, or vice versa, depending on the sex to which one belongs. The importance of the exercise lies in overcoming, according to the synthesis of the supersensible current of the Will, at the boundaries of the physical body, the Luciferic and Ahrimanic determinism: thereby initiating a transformation of the subconscious activity of representation, linked to one's own sexual form and the corresponding counter-image: which is the form of the other sex continuously and instinctively evoked according to the dual influence mentioned above.

Normally, inner development is deeply impeded by the subconscious erotic imagination, which is objectively dominated by the two obstructing Powers: these govern the animal form of reproduction in man and the series of psychophysiological processes that accompany it, and possess the etheric-astral zone

from which the creative imagination draws its strength. Man's most precious imaginative power is seized by the erotic projection of the etheric image of corporeality and its astral counter-image: this projection takes the place of the real image of the inner figure of the other, which is not bound to eros, and is therefore capable of pure soul correlation through the force that normally, at the level of sex, expresses itself as voluptuousness.

A metaphysical path of eros is only possible if we know the background of the erotic process of imagination and the influence exerted in this sense by the Luciferic and Ahrimanic currents. The action of these currents is objectively necessary for the animal manifestation of sex, but normally goes beyond what it must accomplish in the animal sphere, inasmuch as it makes use of the human mind and mobilizes its higher forces according to a craving that does not correspond to the function of sex or to the true being of the other, but only to morbid erotic imagination.

However, when the process of erotic imagination is sublimated and rises to a soul event, in which independent forces of the soul intervene, this independence is equally compromised due to the radical possession of the process by the Obstacle-makers. In reality, the forces of the soul tend toward spiritual reunion with the being of the other, but each time they are deceived by the subconscious erotic correlation with the etheric image and the astral counter-image dominated by the Obstacle-Pitters, whose action on the present human being goes beyond the earthly predestined limit, firmly grasping his existence.

The Science of the Spirit, to which we refer, teaches that the etheric body in man is "feminine" and in woman "masculine," while in both the astral body is androgynous in nature. However, this original androgynous nature of the astral body is latent and is

in any case overwhelmed by the Ahrimanic influence of the physical body which, according to a specific nature, masculine or feminine, imposes its own "cliché" and its etheric counter-image, paralyzing the transcendent power of the androgyny of the astral body and reducing the spiritual relationship to that of the human-animal level. This is the evil that has afflicted human love for millennia: an evil that symbolizes man's servitude to a psychophysiological necessity whose laws escape him. The experimenter of the new times must know these laws through a conscious path that implements, beyond the dimension of quantity, the experience learned in the sphere of quantity: thus going even beyond the ancient yoga and the various spiritualistic or mediumistic forms through which it resurfaces. This path is that of the disciplines of concentration indicated in the previous pages.

In reality, every soul tends toward liberation or redemption, as toward the reconquest of a lost original dimension. This is always potentially active in the soul of the other, as a spontaneous counterpart, when the human couple meets: each brings to the other the dimension that the other essentially seeks, but ignores it and simultaneously opposes this metaphysical movement with the etheric image and the astral counter-imagination dominated by the lower eros: hence man seeks the spiritual woman and woman seeks the spiritual man, yearning deeply for the true inner being of the other, but at the same time rejecting it by virtue of the occult dependence on the Hiciferico-Ahrimanic imagination of the bodily form. Therefore, the path to the realization of human love is a path of reintegration of the soul, of regaining its radical forces that are incorporeally free but corporeally imprisoned in the sentient imagination.

Contemplating the form of one's own skin, experienced with intensity, works to transform the imagination of the other's corporeality, thanks to a rediscovered relationship with the fluidic forces at the boundaries of corporeality, and to overcome the barrier to the complementary being of the soul: which is indeed in the other, but equally intimate to the soul, potentially constituting the "angelic" zone of the soul. The creature one loves brings about its rediscovery, thanks to which the current of creative imagination is set free.

At the limits of corporeality, that is, in the depths of the soul, the synthesis of the two principles, masculine and feminine, is realized, responding to the lost original unity: asceticism can enable us to rediscover it, if it is operatively united with the mystery of the Only Begotten Son of the Father: which is the real secret of the Androgyn. It is the secret of the subtle force which, as a synthesis that can be achieved at the highest level, in the sphere of conscious operations of Light, can work in depth down to the base of the spinal column, freeing the highest powers of the human being, which are cataleptically engaged in the sexual process and feed the morbid erotic imagination from their state of deep sleep.

This nourishment occurs unconsciously even in the purest beings who observe disciplines of chastity. It is the area in which the future destiny of man is decided, because, through erotic imagination, the flower and creative forces of man are continually destroyed: the possibility of the Tree of Life flourishing again is continually rejected, and the generation of vampiric entities, clients of the human psyche, is provoked. Since the highest powers of the human being are bound to this area, the life of the inner human being currently takes place in complete

unconsciousness of it. Everything that ascends from it as an impulse of desire or fear is nothing but the dull echo of the inversion of the Powers.

- *Exercise. The disciple contemplates the form of his own skin. He then evokes the image of the purely etheric-physical structure of his body, independent of the astral carrier of desire. He realistically imagines the pure dynamics of this etheric-physical body and the inexhaustibility of its strength, unimpeded by the inertia of the psyche: therefore chaste, even through the process of sex.*

The perception of the pure dynamics of the etheric-physical body and its objective autonomy leads the disciple to the possibility of specifically transforming the sex instinct through imagination. This must be able to translate into a recovered Lightning-of-the-Light-of-Life.

- *Meditation. Sexual coupling concerns exclusively the etheric-physical bodies, which are incapable of desire in themselves. Desire moves solely from the astral body which, as the body of desire, kama rapa, is foreign to the cosmic reasons for such coupling. In reality, the essential astral body, or higher astral, vajra rapa, immune to desire, participates in mating as pure metaphysical power. In this sense, it is the pure force of the Love of the couple, foreign to sex.*

This meditation contains within itself the seed of the liberation of the psyche from the bond to the current that alters and destroys Life from the depths.

Magical Ataraxia

The faculty of elusiveness can be refined and intensified until it becomes magical ataraxia: it is the possibility of passing through human evil in a state of imperturbability, accepting it as a given fact and transforming it into good. Accepting evil as a given fact is the operation of thought in essence.

Briefly, it can be said that magical ataraxia is the state of connection of the soul with the Higher Self, or with the Logos, such as to provide the perception of the absolute supermaterial content of things, so that there is no event that cannot be recognized as a vehicle of a conjunction with the Spiritual World: there is nothing that cannot be endured or faced with the certainty of dealing essentially with a vehicle of elevation. There is no sacrifice that does not have its content of Light.

From such an inner state, profound relaxation can arise. Meditatively, it leads to the cessation of the habitual reactions of the nervous system and to independence from the usual perception of oneself: to the certainty of the impossibility of being involved, or hurt or wounded by anything, physical or psychic, without the simultaneous resolute action of the ego. It is a dying to the habitual being, an annihilation, an absolute non-being, animated by the being which, unseen, rises again to its essential dimension, free. Immersing oneself in the being that one is, until it is expelled: abandoning the self, no longer wanting anything, moving towards an abyssal rest, descending to the greatest depth, without ceasing to descend for a moment: abandoning oneself endlessly, extinguishing the self, converging towards pure nothingness. It is a matter of becoming what one is

at the origin. It is, in reality, the path of essence: which is the essence of Thought.

Along the way, rediscovering what remains, bring this too to extinction, without fear of losing oneself. Extinction must be insistently brought to the unconscious zone of tension and suffering, which gradually reveals itself until it presents itself as the radical bond of the ego. This bond is felt as something that one fears losing and therefore opposes the operation of the essence. This fear must also be destroyed.

At a certain point, the experimenter feels that his penetration of the reality of the world with his thoughts is a continuous letting himself fall into an abyss, willingly abandoning himself, each time overcoming the fear of sinking: each time rediscovering the identity that the ego has radically with the abyss. It is the identity from which perception and thought continually arise, and from which ordinary man is regularly estranged. This estrangement, at its deepest level, becomes fear. The descent into the depths of oneself is essentially the victory over fear, as thought has redeemed itself and rediscovered its essence.

It is victory over fear because it is a reunion with the Principle of Resurrection, at the root of everything and every entity: but it is at the root of every entity because it is at the root of thought, of the soul, of the etheric body, of the physical body, of the skeletal system, as the pure Power of Fire that contains all the Light and the dynamics of Life. It is the Principle of Resurrection, close to the consciousness of the Self, looming, adjacent, immanent, and yet separated by the barrier of longing tension and fear.

The connection with this Principle was once Faith, or the communion “given” to the soul as the positive Magic of

spontaneity. This communion is rediscovered through the forces of Self-Consciousness and meditatively experienced with the impetus of depth and self-giving, made possible by the volitional determination which, as the original self-dedication of thought, carries within itself the power of the ancient Faith. The magical force that can be drawn upon by those who understand the real meaning of Asceticism in this age, which is not a personal exceptional event but a force operating in the innermost *karma* of humanity: first of all in the *karma* of those who constitute one's "neighbor" and await essential guidance from the ascetic.

His path does not consist in freeing himself from his own ills, which, expelled but not resolved, will be discharged onto the weakest connected to him, according to the mechanism of a lower magic, but in resolving his own ills, so as to be able to take on those of others: which is the path of courage of thought, of elusiveness, of the conquest of essential identity.

XL. Evoke the image of the color red and immerse yourself in it. Suddenly switch to the image of blue and immerse yourself in it as well. Then return to red, then to blue, and so on, until you perceive an intimate synthesis, which manifests itself as the force of independence of the ego from the psyche, within the psyche.

With this exercise, what has matured in the soul in the sense of a selfless love for beings and for the world blossoms as a positive force of elusiveness.

Transformation of the Breath

The disciplines of concentration presented here do not call for breathing techniques, but they can benefit from one of them, which is exceptional and can only be transmitted orally at a certain moment of asceticism, depending on the disciple's ability to use it in a way that does not contradict the spiritual assumption. This may exist, but it is not yet consistent with itself according to absolute determination.

Before the liberation of thought from the cerebral organ and a conscious ability to perceive the subtle or etheric body, any breathing exercise is merely a physical mechanism, illusorily spiritual. In passing, however, it may be mentioned that a purely physical breathing discipline, without ascetic reasons, is beneficial for children up to the threshold of adolescence, i.e., below the age of fourteen, for the purpose of rhythmization of the thoracic area and harmonization of the nervous system with the blood system. In fact, the respiratory process of children naturally carries the active spiritual element, which will disappear later with the onset of rational consciousness.

Breathing exercises do not lead the disciple to the supersensible, simply because he controls and internalizes his breath: they lead him there only if a fluidic-etheric activity is already present in him, of which they can become a vehicle. The disciple must first possess concentration, so as to achieve the separation of thought from the breath, to which it is normally connected, and to arrive at that decisive experience which is the objective perception of thought: the basis of real inner development. The faculty of perceiving thought becomes the

possibility of perceiving the subtle or etheric body and, consequently, the subtle flow of the breath. This possibility is sufficient for the disciple to work on the breath not grossly through its material mechanics, but 'ab interior', and is the basis of a new metaphysical science of breathing, connected to the realization symbolically indicated as the Philosopher's Stone: the technique of which can be communicated by the invisible Masters to the disciple only when he is judged capable of using it unselfishly.

The disciple can be considered worthy of knowing this breathing technique only when he is able to perceive the subtle element of the breath, or the Light of the breath: this is the prerequisite. In the breath, he must perceive the inner element of air: this is the equivalent of the conceptual complement, or essence, of the object in sensory knowledge. Reality arises from the synthesis of concept and object. One of the fundamental achievements of the disciple is the conscious experience of this synthesis: he experiences, through the ether of thought, the essence. In the same way, he perceives in his breath the inner element of fire: this is the experience known as the Archangel of Air. Based on this subtle perception of air, he can intuit the rhythm he must give to his breath and for how many minutes: normally this is a few minutes and practically a certain slowing down of the breath. It must be repeated that the technique as a physical process is not a prerequisite: its particular inner modality is exceptionally communicated as the secret of the Philosopher's Stone to the disciple who attains the etheric perception of the breath, corresponding to a superindividual degree of morality.

Contrary to what is promised in yoga treatises, the disciple realizes that he cannot reach the Spirit by moving from the

breath, but that he can only reach the breath if he is already capable of moving from the Spirit. Inner transformation is first and foremost a moral process: the subtle body can awaken as it frees itself from the series of sentient and cerebral constraints that normally subject it to physical corporeality. For the occultist, knowledge and morality coincide, in that knowledge, rather than mere learning, is direct action in reality. He finds that this action, in itself, without the need for breathing exercises, modifies the breath from within, reversing its physical-etheric-soul polarity: that is, freeing the breath from the Luciferic-Ahimanic domination of the subtle body.

Thanks to asceticism, the breath ceases to move from the physical to the etheric-soul, but moves from the pure soul to the etheric-physical: it ceases to be animal breath, needing to expel carbon dioxide and replenish itself with oxygen: it becomes independent of a vital process essentially dominated by craving. Normally, by inhaling oxygen and exhaling carbon dioxide, humans carry out a process in their etheric-physical body that is the reverse of that of plants, which build their bodies with carbon: plants retain carbon within themselves, using it for the life process and emitting the oxygen necessary for human life.

If ordinary humans did not expel carbon, they would kill life within themselves: by exhaling it, however, they essentially expel a deadly gas, that is, they expel the very element that plants manage to dominate in order to build their living form and give oxygen to humans. From this we can understand how contemplation of plants acts on the subtle, or etheric, body of the contemplator, reawakening in the soul the memory of a lost etheric power. We can say that the “Edenic” man was endowed with such a power.

The inner disciplines act on the subtle body of the ascetic, nourishing it from within with pure etheric life that does not require oxygen: in this way, the same process—not animalistic, not egoistic—that the plant carries out as it is built up by supersensible forces transcending its physical form, takes place in the ascetic's vital or etheric body. The ascetic ceases to need oxygen for the vital processes of the body because in breathing he retains carbon and emits oxygen, realizing through conscious will the process which in plants is accomplished by astral forces not involved in the physical sphere.

Carbon is retained in the ascetic through the etheric or vital body, but as this is purified, thanks to the asceticism of thought, by transcendent forces that in the soul free the human from the human-soul-le.

The need to expel carbon and to constantly replenish oxygen is the sign of fallen man, incapable of dominating Life with the Spirit: that is, incapable of making the substantial element of Matter serve the building of Life. Therefore, Matter is for man the symbol of Death: the continuous reification of nothingness.

By absorbing oxygen through breathing, man performs an operation that is a sign of his weakness, that is, of his subjection to desire and the necessity of Death. Emitting carbon dioxide and inhaling oxygen is the physiological process proper to the animal organism: for man, it is the process of the desire for Life based on a material view of the world, which is the opposite of Truth. Matter does not move Life, but is moved by Life, from the mineral state to the caloric state. The relationship of the plant with carbon expresses the dominion of Life over Matter: therefore, the plant can emit oxygen. In man, the relationship is altered by the craving for Life, whereby Matter overwhelms Life,

and man, in order to survive in such conditions, must continuously absorb oxygen and exhale carbon dioxide.

The disciple who follows the right ascetic path restores the original relationship between Life, that is, the etheric currents, and physical corporeality, bringing about in the latter a process opposite to that of animal nature: he retains carbon and exhales oxygen. If we consider that carbon in its pure state is diamond, we can understand the Gnostic expression “adamantine body” or “body of glory,” indicating the subtle body restored to its original state. We can also understand the key to *Vajrayana*, the term *Vajra* meaning both diamond and lightning. This does not mean that *Vajrayana* is a current path. The path of the diamond-lightning bolt can indeed be retraced today, but only by the experimenter who knows the asceticism of the new times, the secret of living thought, so that he can master the astral-etheric forces normally engaged in the formation of concepts. These forces are unknown to modern man, despite his normal use of them. The concept arose in Greece as the first determination of thought, still having the world to be known as its opposite, while in modern thought the possibility arises for the first time that, through conscious volition, it can be realized as the content of the world: certainly, insofar as it knows its own pre-dialectical moment, the presence of the ego.

The conversion of thought becomes the conversion of breath. Concentration on the breath is essentially an exercise in pure perception.

The disciplines of concentration lead to the perception of the subtle body when accompanied by exercises in pure perception. These presuppose the ability to stop the flow of thought and to

achieve mental silence: that is, they presuppose control of thought and feeling.

Pure Perception

The exercise of pure perception can be practiced using any sensory object, but initially it must be practiced using certain perceptions of the plant and mineral world.

- *The experimenter must start from mental silence. In a state of silence, he exercises himself in contemplating a detail of the plant kingdom—a flowering branch, a meadow, a hedge in silhouette, a tree in the distance, tufts of vegetation fading in the sunlight—or the blue of the sky or the sea, or the flowing water of a stream, or the still water of a lake. He must train himself to perceive the object without thinking: yet he must have the same clear awareness of it as he has of the object of concentration at the end of the exercise. He must look in such a way that only seeing acts, accompanied by absolute mental silence. Nothing else.*

What awakens within through such contemplation must not come from thought or feeling. The art of the disciple is to oppose the object with his own metaphysical immobility: that is to say, the I. What is awakened within through pure perception must unfold in pure astral-etheric-physical depth as a consequence of the essential identity established by the ego with the thing. Thanks to this identity, normal perception ordinarily arises.

The exercise of pure perception is not accompanied by any meditation: it is already meditation, direct inner action, absolutely adialectical. This is where its strength lies.

The green color of the plant world expresses the etheric power of Life that is constantly on the verge of overcoming the Death of Matter: in the sap of the plant, the dead element of minerality is permeated with Life. Contemplating green has therapeutic virtues because it stimulates in the contemplator the element of Life that overcomes the Death impulse of bodily minerality. The art of the ascetic is to provide such contemplation of the maximum emptiness of consciousness.

The element of Life that awakens through pure perception is what the Hermeticists call “Stellar Food” or “Food of Resurrection,” and Rosicrucian disciples recognize as the “New Eucharist.” In essence, a movement of the subtle or etheric body is reawakened, expressing the original dominion of the ego over the world through the mental body. This movement operates down to the physical level, according to an order that is a germinal restoration of the Primordial State.

While the exercise of pure perception with regard to the vegetable world requires an absolute absence of inner activity, or conscious immobility, the perception of a mineral requires a background thought: the idea of the presence of force “outside” the physical form, as opposed to it, or as a negative. This relationship is typically grasped in the contemplation of a crystal. The underlying thought is that the power of that form is where its material appearance ceases: where it has left its immaterial imprint, perceptible as a symbol of the Spirit that annihilates Matter.

A similar underlying thought must accompany the perception of the crystal, the exercise of which, depending on the moral development of the disciple, arouses essential supersensible forces. The Spirit, which through a process of “incarnation” expresses

itself in man as thought, in animals being less incarnate, as a formative force, is present in the crystal in its pure, “disincarnate” state. The perception of crystals awakens fundamental forces of the soul, insofar as the exercise is carried out with real dedication to its content and with the time necessary for this.

- *Meditation. The form of the crystal is the symbol of the negation of Matter.* Contemplating the crystal evokes its supersensible principle in the sphere of the pure Unmanifest, corresponding to the degree of Nirvana: one imagines that such a sphere is “present” in the form of the crystal: not locatable at any point, but arising in the contemplative connection: *to which the crystal gives itself as a symbol of the encounter of extra-spatial forces in space.* While the Archetype of man is incarnated in him and emerges as the I, the Archetype of the animal lives disincarnated in the lower astral sphere, that of the plant in the higher astral, that of the mineral in the pure Spiritual. Therefore, it has the power of penetration into space.
- *Meditation. The Spirit in man destroys and recreates Nature according to the Logos:* it dissolves the mineral element in the physical sphere, making it the support of the consciousness of the I; it grasps the vegetal element in the etheric-physical sphere, making its vital flow a power of rhythm; it asserts itself over the animal organism in the astral-etheric-physical sphere, transforming the current of instincts into conscious Light of the Will.

Every incarnation of the Spirit in Nature, not dominated by the Logos, is a fall of the Spirit into animality, which in man

becomes corruption of the animal nature. Only in man does the Spirit become freedom: corruption can be overcome in the act of freedom, as the reunion of the soul with the Spirit of incorruptibility.

- *Meditation. Nature tends to continue to shape man according to cosmic impulses that in the past legitimately had the task of connecting his inner life with corporeality, until the experience of free consciousness. This consciousness can realize its own supersensible nature only where it spiritualizes the individual element bound to the sensible. To this end, it cannot but oppose the cosmic impulses that insist on its psychophysical formation according to the past direction, which, continuing in the old way to push the soul toward bodily physicality, now cannot but work toward the animalization of man. This is what is already happening.*

Modern man risks no longer knowing the real background of his existence if he believes he can find the way to the supersensible in doctrines or methods that did not allow for knowledge of the “subtle” process of thought and of the power of determination required by its logical-scientific expression, nor of the identity of the ego with the real in sensory perception. In this power and in this identity, as has been shown, the unknown resurgent force of the ego is expressed. Concentration techniques have the task of leading the disciple to the experience of pure determination in perception and thinking.

The presence of the ego can be experienced in pure determination in perception as well as in thinking. The experience of pure determination must have the same concreteness as perception: it must itself become perception. The

typical exercise of concentration, essentially leading to the awareness of pure determination, prepares the disciple for that preliminary initiatory experience, which is the presence of the ego in the flow of the light of the soul in things.

The flow of the Light of the soul in beings and things through perception and thinking, as a continuous act of unconscious love, by constitutional virtue, directed towards the world, can be recognized by the disciple. He intuits an inexhaustible function that demands not to be contradicted, but rather to become conscious, in order to expand according to the highest Light of ideas. The I becomes present to the flow of Light. This presence is metaphysical immobility in the face of the mobility of the soul in things and in the world. Without such immobility, the I in its contingent expressions continually destroys or deteriorates the Light.

The Food of Life

Normally, in perceiving, one has the sensation of entering into a direct relationship with things. The experimenter must be able to realize this same relationship through discipline, with the power of identity, which is the power by which the ego enters into the heart of things, in the pre-dialectical moment of perceiving and thinking. Each time, this magical moment is lost by man, for the sake of ego sensation and dialectical knowledge.

Identity should not be thought, even if it must initially be thought: it must be perceived. This is what the properly preparatory disciplines aim at. Where identity is perceived, it becomes awareness of the ego's identification with the essence of the world: reality and knowledge coincide.

The real content of things is immaterial, or supersensible. It is the content that the ego already has within itself in its supersensible domain, but which it must encounter through the senses on Earth as external content. In this encounter, its power of identity with things becomes the power of redemption of their materiality: however, this requires the free act that expresses its original independence from things. The power of identity is what secretly works in the world as the real connection between beings or entities, according to their Principle.

At the human level, the connection proceeding from the power of identity of the ego manifests itself as love: ascending from the lowest, or sensual, degree to that which fully expresses the essence, that is, the Principle of the ego itself. Ordinary love is expressed exclusively through the astral body, binding itself to sex:

it is inevitably changeable and transitory, inasmuch as it ignores the dynamic connection with the Principle, which is in itself independent of the craving nature of the astral body. The ego is the Principle that alone can reawaken the original celestial nature in the astral body, inasmuch as, in relation to it, it realizes, in identity, its own state of absolute independence, or “immobility.”

The ego cannot dominate that in which it moves, identified with it, but only that in relation to whose movement it realizes, in identity, its own *metaphysical immobility*. Because of the dialectical level of consciousness, the ego moves in reflection, it has no independence from reflection: independence flashes only in the fleeting moment of becoming reflected. Normally, since this moment is not conscious, the ego identifies with reflexivity, in which its virtually free being can move only through the support of the senses: independence from the support flashes before it, thanks to which its experience of the contents of the world is continuously directed, or supersensible, in an unconscious manner.

In reality, in this situation, we can recognize the contradiction between the original illegitimate prevalence of the astral body over the ego and the initial emergence of processes of ego autonomy through modern rational thinking. Against this nascent autonomy, which is the real value of the inner human being, the instinctive nature is continually mobilized, especially in intellectual form, systematically fed by the series of doctrines of matter and by the related ideologies and psychologies.

Inner investigation makes it possible to ascertain that the real content of sensory perception is not sensible: what is sensible is its path, or its support. Its actual entity is always an extrasensible process, like a pure content of thought, pre-rational, non-

dialectical, endowed with imaginative motion. It arises from the direct encounter of the ego with the physical world. However, ordinary consciousness does not perceive this encounter: it resonates within it through the etheric-astral vehicle and presents itself as perception, which always arises as an astral-etheric content, an original imagination, immediately dampened by dialectical consciousness.

It should be emphasized that in perception there is no passage of physical matter from the perceived to the perceiving consciousness: neither are the nerve conduits perception, just as water pipes are not water; nor are the electromagnetic vibrations along the path of perception perception, just as the hoofprints of a horse are not the horse. When modern scientists have overcome their realistic-naïve positions in this sense, they will be able to turn their investigation positively to the astral-etheric currents that structure perception as forces of the original imagination.

The fabric of this imagination is the same as that of pre-dialectical thought: purely intuitive: it is the dynamic fabric of identity, which is realized as the identity of the ego with being: of the ego which in itself cannot know duality, or an opposite world, because it is the essence of the world. This image, whose enunciation may sound philosophical, responds to the reality of the identity of the ego with the world, thanks to which man perceives and thinks every day, while ignoring the magical-dynamic moment to which he draws each time for this purpose.

Identity is the real encounter of the ego with the world, in perceiving and thinking. Normally, this encounter is unknown. Through asceticism, the ego begins to recognize its own penetration of the world, which normally appears external to it. It begins to rediscover it, first by separating the initial inner content

from the world that appears external: it appears as such until, in relation to it, it totally reconstitutes within itself what is its superworld: its very essence as ego. The ascetic must be able to feel himself to be the ego of every entity: he must be able to say 'I' of every being or created thing: this is his resurrection from the realm of the prevarication of the astral body.

The I frees itself by grasping, first of all cognitively, the contradiction from which duality and the spirit of aversion arise simultaneously. In the world, the I emerges as self-consciousness, which at first has nothing but extra-conscious identity with being: it is not aware of its identity, because awareness arises reflected. At the same time, self-consciousness, insofar as it is reflected, knows itself only because it is opposed to being, which, in turn, being reflected, illusorily appears outside its power of identity. This initial movement of self-consciousness is what is normally called the ego, but it is nothing more than the reflected ego, the opposite of the ego: of the ego, which through identity is destined to bring the power of Love into the world. The reflected ego always inevitably reverses this direction, inasmuch as it has the world as external reality against it: the whole world, others, its own kind.

There can be no overcoming of the error of human thought, connected with dualistic appearance, nor of the mechanistic ideologies that spring from it, nor of the hatred that such a level entails against every creative value and every qualitative hierarchy, without rediscovering the univocally real content of the world, at least initially by a few. The imaginative-intuitive fabric of predialectical thought, from which dialectical thought is estranged, is the inner content of the world: without it, the world appears external and dual. In dialectical thought, the ego exists

only as a reflection: it is unaware of the inner content of reality, into which it therefore metaphysically penetrates as into its own content, thanks to the identity continuously actualized in inner perception and immediate thinking.

It is important, however, not to forget that it is precisely through dialectical thought, which is thought devoid of imaginative-intuitive life, yet affected by duality, that the ego experiences the dimension of freedom: but it experiences it for the benefit of psychophysiological nature, which provides the support for such thought. This freedom with a tangible support, in the vehicle of corporeality, is indeed contingent and as such proclaimed by modern rhetoricians of freedom: it is, however, the source of human disasters, until it realizes its extracorporeal dimension, which is its possibility of being true, that is, of expressing itself as a will not subordinate to animal processes. Freedom, realized in its essential Light, is the prerequisite for the Love that the ego, beyond reflexivity, brings into the world.

The ego is free but imprisoned by its own inferior freedom, inasmuch as this has no expression except in reflection. Everything is reflected: sensory appearance is essentially a reflection: therefore it appears "material." If it were not reflected, it would be intimately penetrable. There is still nothing into which man truly penetrates, either outside or inside himself: nothing into which he can immerse himself. Even the voluptuousness of the senses, at every point where the proof eludes him. It eludes him in a temporal sense, due to the mirage of a blissful content that can be grasped in the next moment: being in reality the inner content, the true, imperceptible to reflected consciousness. Thus colors, shapes, lights, thoughts,

feelings: ditto is given to him in the indefinite reflectivity, or superficiality, which is the impenetrable form of Life.

It is the ancient deprivation of the virtue of the Tree of Life, which according to myth followed the Luciferian seduction and the loss of Eden: a virtue that the Logos will restore to those who know how to recognize it in themselves as the intimate force of the Ego. It is the force that in the astral body can defeat the lunar Serpent without the need to fight it. This force will flourish in the West as the volitional determination of the thought of man capable of achieving conscious experience.

The impenetrability of Life is accepted by modern man as a necessary fact, incontrovertible in the guise of physical measurability: to which he abandons himself as to an unlimited value, while it is the absence of that living element which constitutes real value. It is the value that emerges in the pre-dialectical moment of perception and thought: from which it separates itself through the determination of dialectical thought. At the level of this thought devoid of Life, limited to quantitative connection, yet unlimited in its ability to argue and calculate, man is free: but it is a freedom without hope of realization. It is a freedom without breath, because it lacks knowledge of the world, which, beyond the film of quantity, supports free being: it lacks knowledge of its own movement, its own direction, its own meaning, with respect to the support of freedom.

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From the above picture, we can intuitively understand the task of the ascetic who strives for conscious experimentation with Life, that is, with the power of identity of the ego with the beings and things of the world. The experimentation of this power is the

path to authentic 'freedom', of which instinctive freedom is the opposite direction, preceding it on the unconscious thread of aversion towards beings and the world. The instinctive current is always egocentric because it does not go beyond the astral limit, while the current of the power of identity, insofar as it moves from the ego, is the opposite. Therefore, the Asceticism of Freedom is essentially the Asceticism of Love.

We have seen how the discipline of pure perception and pure thinking is the method by which the experimenter of this time realizes the power of identity of the ego, that is, of the earthly bearer of the cosmic power of Love. In this sense, the series of exercises in concentration, meditation, and contemplation proper to modern spiritual science has been proposed. However, it should not be forgotten that the asceticism of pure perception, which is fundamental for the experimenter of the new age, is the least familiar to him, because it is being presented in practice for the first time: the ego turns to its own power of identity with the sensible world through perception itself, according to a process unknown to the past disciplines of the supersensible.

The mental silence brought to bear on the perception of a crystal or a plant is a direct experience that the ego has of its own power of identity through perception. At that moment, the ascetic realizes the process by which the ego encounters the astral in order to reach the physical. For him, the liberation of the astral from the sentient "lunar" element, which normally hinders the solar consciousness of the ego, begins. In the soul, the entity of the crystal or plant reveals itself: a force arises within, which is essentially the identity of the power of the ego with it, and is projected into the object as an etheric vision. This vision is a

symbol, necessary for the operation, but it is not the most important element of it.

In contemplating the crystal or the plant, the experimenter consciously grasps the element of Life in perception: he can have his first experience of being inserted into a current of Life. In which he is actually always, but consciously never is: normally he lives in the sensation and representation of Life, not in Life. Life as such eludes him, since he is estranged from it by his reflected consciousness: but he owes to this estrangement the lucid consciousness of wakefulness, which leads him to contemplate with determination the finite, measurable world, devoid of inner content. Lacking the element of Life, he lacks the fluid vehicle of Light: which is the vehicle of the ego in the soul, the Logos. In fact, due to the subjugation of the ego to the "lunar" astral, he perceives Light as reflected: while in continuous perception it encounters Life, outside of reflective consciousness.

The craving that excites, exhausts, and destroys man is essentially nostalgia and, at the same time, the obsessive search for the lost element of Life, which perception allows us to sense but does not give us, hiding it instead in the astral reflection. Illusorily, in the sensation of what is perceived, that is, in the ever-elusive possession of what is perceived, he seeks this element of Life: this, in the dynamic pre-dialectical moment of perception, punctually withdraws from reflected consciousness. However, without it, there would be no perception.

Man does not really live: he exists. That is, he stands outside Life, on the margins of the living element. And it is right that this should be so for now. If he possessed the element of Life without being free from desire, he would produce demonic forms endowed with magical power. This is why, in the biblical myth,

the Lord orders Adam to be removed from the Tree of Life: to prevent him from bringing to it the damage caused in him by Lucifer's seduction.

If he possessed, without corrupting it, the element of Life through which he exists, man would not die. He uses the current of Life, he is inserted into it, but he does not perceive it: his perception, although mediated by the current of Life, is limited to the sensible, it stops at dead minerality: here too at the reflection of the object, at appearance, not at being. Being moves from him, through him, unknown. He knows it only after Death, he encounters it unconsciously during sleep: but he has it continually within his thoughts, in the pre-dialectical moment. Initiatory art is rediscovering the Logos at the source of thought, beyond the *maya* of thought. Once rediscovered in thought, it is recognized as the element of Light of Life in every perception.

At the very least, the current of Life emerges in poetic imagination, that is, in aesthetic activity, when it is authentic and not cerebral, and in intuitive thought, which is an increasingly rare experience in human beings. It emerges, however, unconsciously. Energetic and true discipline of thought is necessary to open consciousness to its basic current of Life. But it must be the discipline given by the real Guides of humanity: the discipline that does not evade the power of identity of the I, expressing itself as determination of thought for sensory experience and as an inner process of perception. Pure thought and pure perception must be experienced in a modern way.

Initiation

The series of concentration exercises, including those of pure perception, must lead the disciple to an independence of the soul from the astral body, or sentient body, which opens the way to the leading Force of the ego and to the initial perception of the subtle body. Thanks to this perception, he comes to penetrate instinctive movements and recognize them as sentient contents dominated by the spirit of aversion. The spirit of aversion is rooted in man because it is the concrete force of the ego enslaved to the senses: it must free itself from the senses in order to truly be the force of the ego. The ego must come to operate radically in reality, without being bound to the sensible, which is proper to the astral body.

Everything that the experimenter normally feels or conceives through the spirit of aversion within him is deceptive, but he is powerless against it as long as his subjection to it is unconscious. He must normally recognize himself as being moved by the spirit of aversion, as by what he considers to be the ego and is the opposite of the ego. As soon as he recognizes this, the true ego expresses itself in him and begins to free itself from the necessity of aversion.

The disciple separates the impulse of aversion from the sentient movement, thereby achieving the transformation of the instinctive content. The moment the tension of aversion disappears, the liberated force of the ego manifests itself penetratingly in its place. When the disciple discovers the spirit of aversion at the origin of a soul movement, he can identify the point where true freedom springs forth: which, as the

independence of the ego from the astral body, is freedom from karma.

An important step forward is taken by the disciple when, behind the recognition of the inversion of Light in reflected consciousness, he succeeds in perceiving at the center of every instinctive content the inverted force of the ego, but authoritative as if it were the ego, imperiously bearing the presumption of the ego: *Lego*. The self-assertion of the ego is essentially the opposite of the movement of love. The disciple must discover that what he normally calls the ego is not the ego, but the spirit of aversion, that is, the opposite of the Spirit. The whole of earthly experience has no other meaning than the Resurrection of the ego as an individual event.

The suffering that accompanies every impulse of hatred, worry, criticism, accusation, fear, irritation, etc., is the contrast of the pure current of the ego with its own inverse force: functioning, in the sense of aversion, as the ego. It is usually reversed in reflexivity and, even when reversed, continues to be an emanation of the original force, which flows continuously, being corrupted, diverted, or reversed. It is the contradiction of the human being, from which the mah of the soul and body and the impulse of reintegration spring simultaneously. This consists in the conversion and agreement of the altered current of the Light of the Self with its original cosmic form.

- *Meditation. The disciple contemplates the Light of the Self descending from the supramental sphere along the spinal axis and animates within himself the image: "The Light that is below is like the Light that is above." He perceives the descending Light as the power of Sacrifice and Liberation of the Life of Light, which at every degree*

along the spine redeems the impulses of the spirit of aversion.

The *motions of the spirit* of aversion, being of a “lunar” nature, have a direction that is, so to speak, parallel to the Earth, that is, horizontal: they acquire the power of vertical ascent along the spine, due to the inversion of the Light, enslaved to the spirit of aversion: the source of human Evil. The vertical current of the ego descending from above meets the horizontal current of adversity at the level of the shoulder blades and forms through them the Cross, which appears as a black Cross, or as a transmuting Cross of Light, not fixable in a specific color. The disciple contemplates in the Cross the restored Solar Power. The horizontal current, which previously expressed itself as destructive *vis*, becomes a catalytic force of the Ego overcoming duality, according to the arcane scheme of the Logos: *Pater Ejus Sol, Mater Ejus Luna...*

At this point, the disciple acquires knowledge of the path he must follow for the animation of the astral centers (chakras), or of the original astral body, which is, essentially, the soul, the vehicle of the ego. Any description of the chakras, even if taken from traditional texts, is merely indicative, if not approximate. Such descriptions, when authentic, correspond to a transcendent physiology, in relation to which the present inner man has undergone profound changes. It would therefore be erroneous to concentrate presumptuously on awakening the virtue of a particular center, according to that type of occult physiology. These are organs whose original embryos are present in the soul body, at a level corresponding to dreamless sleep consciousness. Any connection between ordinary consciousness and these organs is illusory, as well as harmful: only the moral development of the

disciple can indirectly bring about their reactivation. Direct reactivation requires regular ascetic techniques, i.e., techniques relevant to the inner structure of the human being of this age, for whom supersensible action and moral development coincide. It is essentially necessary that the waking consciousness, through the current of liberated thought, rise to the level corresponding to the dreamless sleep state, which is precisely the level of the Life of Light.

Initiation is conferred on the disciple by invisible Masters who, in relation to this task, can make themselves visible, naturally where this corresponds to a coincidence of *karma* with the principle of the disciple's freedom, inasmuch as certain conditions equivalent to the individual overcoming of the human-animal limit, proper to the whole human species, have been fulfilled by him. Until that moment, the disciple must be his own master: he is left completely free to experience pure solitude. In this part of the path, which may be more or less long, he may be helped or assisted by the instructor, whose vicarious task is first and foremost to maintain contact with the Initiatic Order through his own fidelity and consistency: he also clarifies or provides him with the techniques of concentration and asceticism aimed at the absolute independence of the soul from the human-animal element, so that he may victoriously cross the zone where solitude will be absolute. It is solitude that allows the disciple to find himself in the Self, that is, in the transcendent immanent center, whose realization entails univocal communion with other beings and with the world. This communion must be deliberately regained by him again and again.

The disciple accepts the teaching that can no longer come to him from books. The teaching is now in his soul as the language

of direct intuition. However, such intuition would not be possible for him if it had not already been realized by the invisible Masters, as pathfinders, whom he allows to guide him through faithfulness and liberation of thought. This is the true meaning of reconnection with the permanence of Tradition.

Any technique of proceeding beyond the limits of nature, with regard to the breath or the animation of the centers of the subtle body or the centers of the astral body, at this stage of development, springs from the intuition of the disciple, as he begins to perceive the subtle body.

The concentration techniques outlined so far converge towards the following possibility: that the disciple, identifying the central current of the etheric body in the flow of predialectical thought, begins to work through it. This gives him an indication of the further path and the awareness that he owes this indication to his connection with the invisible Masters.

With the initial realization of the center of etheric forces in the heart, the disciple encounters the experience described by the Master of the new times as the etherization of the blood: he experiences a process of redemption of matter that normally takes place within him, but which he can perceive and realize consciously as a movement of new life in the soul. This event marks his initiatory connection with the Rosicrucian Order. He perceives the process by which a transcendent phenomenon connected with the unspeakable content of the Grail takes place incessantly in the heart: a part of the blood is transformed into Light, returning as pure etheric force capable of conveying the Higher Self. Thanks to this etherization, the Life current of Light ascends from the center of the heart to the etheric center of the head. In ordinary human beings, this is normally contradicted by

the current in the head, which continually reverses the Light of Life through the dialectical process. It is this reversal that gives rise to dialectical consciousness, the impulse of the ego to oppose the Spirit: the spirit of aversion.

There is no individual in whom the process of etherization of the blood is not at work, as a pre-individual presence of the Light of the Logos, which he is free to contradict or to allow to act with the maximum of its transcendent power in the soul, down to the corporeality. The possibility of contradicting the etheric restitution of the Light ascending from the heart and therefore of opposing the current of the Spirit is the germ of human freedom. Precisely the one who is free to oppose the etheric current of Life is simultaneously free to go with the will to meet it and to let it act according to its law: thus he can in essence realize his free being and finally act not illusorily in the world, every ordinary action expressing unconscious subjection to the Powers of the Obstacle, false freedom. The ultimate meaning of human freedom is indeed to be able to willingly accept the Order of the Spirit, which does not compel, being original Reality. The ultimate meaning of the earthly ego is to achieve the asceticism of its own annihilation: the maximum of its strength is to extinguish itself. Once extinguished, the extinguishing force remains as a higher power of the ego, which is at the beginning and which alone has the strength to penetrate the materiality of the Earth: to continue the journey of man.

The ascetic path traced so far leads the disciple to the Threshold of the Spiritual World, where he can meet his Master, the Initiator, the one who, having followed him unbeknownst to him, gives meaning or impetus to his further experience. But crossing the Threshold is an act that must be accomplished by

him, thanks to his initiative, his mature decision, his attained dignity, his valour, and above all his courage. The path is shown to him, but he must walk it alone. He is given the Strength, but he must dare to take the first step in accordance with it. At this point, the disciple knows what it means to have followed a “conscious” and modern path, corresponding to the knowledge of man's current inner condition. The path traced in these pages is a valid preparation for the experience of the Threshold: towards it, the culminations of the ascetic *opus* have been indicated, capable of overcoming the individual limit, according to the initiatory canon of the new times.

This limit is the human limit, which man actually fears to overcome, because it is his support, the ultimate reason—albeit illusory—for life, his habitual form, *cliché*, unconscious mechanism, endowed with its own spiritualistic, philosophical, psychoanalytic, etc., codification. In reality, the animal in man keeps him in check, and man secretly fears ceasing to be dominated by it, because he has conformed all his ways of being, from knowing to feeling, sleeping, breathing, etc., to this domination. Change presents itself to him as something tragic. Therefore, he normally turns to methods or disciplines that do not disturb the animalistic part of himself, which is subordinate to the human-animal part, and do not imply real change.

The Science of the Spirit to which we refer addresses this problem. For modern man, there is the possibility of a discipline which, without directly opposing the human-animal element, gradually transforms it from within its own determinations, in the sentient sphere, operating according to its spiritual principle. This is the Way of Thought: it realizes the direct experience of the etheric light of nature through the current of thought made

independent of nature. In relation to what has been shown, the art of the disciple consists in taking possession of a force that manifests itself in thought every time, but is not thought itself: it is a matter of bringing this force to manifestation through any theme, thinking intensely about its content, but taking care to grasp it beyond this. The Force of Thought is the very current of Life in which Light flows.

Absolute Determination

Not unlike the assumption of Tantrism, the method we have indicated leads the experimenter from the semi-conscious sensation of Life to the perception of the etheric current of Life, through the passage from ordinary lifeless thought to its living element, that is, from the reflected Light of thought to its Light of Life. This Light of Life is experienced in the pre-dialectical moment of thinking, as in perceiving.

It is therefore clear that, in relation to its own assumption, Tantrism cannot provide the method required by the inner constitution of modern man, who, in order to experience the etheric current of Life, must free the subtle powers of thought from the sensible, since he cannot move from the condition proper to his athial thinking consciousness: the reflected condition. The man of this age fundamentally needs a technique for liberating the reflective consciousness, because at this level he is subject to the dominance of instinctive life. He therefore needs a technique for liberating Light through reflective thinking, from which he moves, that is, an asceticism of thinking that rediscovers pre-dialectical Life, thanks to the resolution of the reflective condition: that is, rising from reflection to Light.

The current of Life is not normally possessed by man: it flows as a formative force of his physical body, but he has no conscious relationship with it: as we have seen, it emerges, unconsciously, in the original moment of thought and perception. This current of Life, as a formative etheric body, builds the physical body, but in the upper part, arising independently of the organizing bodily

function, it becomes a vehicle of the Spirit, constituting the original element of perception and thought.

In thinking that is detached from the flow of Life, man is free: he becomes conscious in mental-spiritual reflection, devoid of vital motion, that is, in the reflection of Light, which therefore, thanks to the volitional element inherent in it, transcends the vital body itself. In reflective thought, man loses the vital current and therefore the original Light, but it is precisely from this that he is placed in the realm of freedom, which allows him—where he acquires consciousness of it—to voluntarily retrace the reflection until he rediscovers the element of Life, in which the Light shines again. This rediscovery is possible for thought, provided that it overcomes the limit of reflexivity, which, despite its freedom, subjects it to psychophysiological nature. Abstract freedom always ends up being the freedom of the instincts within him: the opposite of his real freedom, which, as we have seen, is the pre-dialectical Impulse of consciousness: the Impulse of the original Heat of Light.

Such a contradictory state postulates the reconnection of thought with its own source of Life: it therefore refers to the technique of concentration. Thought must gather within itself to renucleate its own force: which is internal, not reflected, not conscious. It can achieve this by focusing on an idea.

The idea always has its own central force, but it is potential, as it normally exists in an abstract form: through concentration, it can be willed from its center and saturated with the Life from which it actually arises and of which it is normally deprived. If one is aware of the real process of duality, one can understand the meaning of this operation, which is the reconnection of the subtle forces of the soul with the ego: a reconnection that means

overcoming duality. This overcoming does not happen for free. Its absence is the source of human evil and the corresponding pain.

The reconnection is the restoration of the essence that had been taken away from thought from the beginning, so that thought necessarily thought of essence as a metaphysical or superhuman entity: it could not realize it as immanent Life. It is the volitional movement of the free being or the non-animal being of the soul, which dissolves from the reflective state with which it is normally identified. The free act gives rise to a higher, non-conscious mediation that connects its transcendent product with the current of the body of Life: that is, with the supersensible current through which the Principle of the Self operates unbeknownst to the soul, like a Light of Fire that conquers the processes of materiality. The force that gives the ego the power to connect with the body of Life is the Logos, which is intimate to it, as its very Principle: this force, which restores the essence, acts at the moment of freedom, when thought awakens from the hallucination of reflexivity. This moment of freedom is in effect the moment of Will: the Light of Fire of the Logos is kindled, unseen. Initiatory art is to see it.

Dialectical thought can be brought from the *possibility* to the *reality* of freedom, thanks to the volitional determination that makes it conscious of its self-movement. Any dialectical thought, or reflection, can be thought intensely, until it opens up to its own charge of will: in this Will is the element of Life that makes it rise again from its reflective state.

In the act of concentration, freedom and Will coincide: the idea, rediscovering its essence, becomes an idea-force, capable of overcoming any thought foreign to the reality of the soul, and therefore of operating independently of the psyche: as a new seed

of destiny. At the level of degradation proper to the reflective state, thought is inevitably manipulated by the Powers that hinder us: from which man cannot escape unless he frees thought from reflectivity. The reflective element of freedom, which manages to rise to its own non-reflective moment, actually draws its own resurrection from a state of death. Thought can desire its own reflection, to the point of perceiving it as movement and, following the movement, drawing on the source of intuitive synthesis, which overcomes duality: where the human is not separated from the Superhuman: where the Word becomes flesh. By virtue of this act of will, the idea rises again as an idea-force: it regains the essence of which the original deities had deprived it, keeping it for themselves in order to dominate man. In effect, the ascetic who implements free individuality, rediscovers the essence.

Anyone who knew nothing of the Logos made Man, and yet, renewing the perpetuity of Tradition in the depths of their soul, intuited the way of the New Mysteries, and therefore identified the Will flowing from the essence, which is the perception of the primal relationship, or of the idea-force, and in this sense acted ascetically, would inevitably come to see in himself the golden Light of the Principle, flowing in the determination of thought, to be realized in physicality. He could even give it another name: even to a degree where the recognition of the Logos made man was inevitable, but he, because of his specific function, had to temporarily resort to the expression of a particular tradition.

That principle carries the power of reconnection, because it restores essence to thought. But only when it is freed can thought accept it: the ego can articulate itself in the living current of thought. The ego realizes this power all the more, the more it is itself in the soul, *independent* of the soul: it then manifests its

power to reintegrate the instincts and passions as the powers of the soul.

Man can penetrate the mystery of his own body of life, insofar as it is an expression of the cosmic formative force through whose flow the Logos is present on Earth. The disciple can indirectly influence the body of life when he actualizes in his thinking the essence, the Logos, which frees him from dialectics. The ego can finally work in the soul as the center of the Logos' activity on earth: it becomes the conqueror and transformer of human evil.

* * *

The ultimate meaning of concentration techniques is the opening of the soul to the Power of its own Principle: an event that can be achieved through the animation of the central current of the “subtle body,” or etheric body, on which, as we have seen, the waking consciousness has a direct hold through thought. Thought, dominated and internalized, realizes its own etheric motion, and thus the connection with the central etheric current that receives within itself the Life Power of the Logos.

In every thought that thinks, the possibility of the Logos emerges. However, this possibility is contradicted by thought that falls into reflexivity and therefore sees the world as devoid of Logos, as objective nature, with which the relationship is measurability, desire, and discursiveness. Nature imprisoned in material form is not liberated by man who mystically submits to its material appearance, excluding the Logos, in order to build his own transitory Science, his own contingent Culture.

Man, founded on reflective consciousness, essentially drawing his sense of self from the astral body rather than from the ego,

does not live in a real state of wakefulness: his task is to realize as ego his own state of wakefulness, that is, the level he actually achieves through sensory perception. We have seen how the first degree of elevation of the inner life, through discipline, is the conquest of consciousness of the perceptual process, which is normally unconscious.

The non-consciousness of the reflective condition is essentially a state of sleep of consciousness. Man carries within himself the liberating force, but he destitutes it in the reflexive attitude of freedom which, lacking an inner circuit, absurdly attempts to express itself on the physical plane, where being free makes no sense: being free is the function of the inner Principle that dominates the physical plane and orders it, because it transcends it.

The absurd freedom of the ego on the sensible plane generates its own ethics, its laws, its struggles, its breaking of laws, the tensions of unbridled desire, and its unlimited dissatisfaction. The Logos is not only distorted, but also opposed. There is a part of humanity that in this sense risks losing the embryonic possibility of regeneration according to the Logos: it risks losing the human level, which is already a level of decline. The human generates the subhuman if the meaning of the human is not regenerated by the Logos. The karma that weighs on the individual and the community today depends on the inferior, if not corrupt, use of thought, through which man is free to subject the divine-spiritual forces within himself to desire.

The real content of the human is not nature, but the Supernatural, the Logos. The possibility of such recognition is present etherically in every thought that thinks. This thought should turn to nature only to bring it the content it lacks and for

whose lack it appears merely physical. It is the content that is intimate and original to it, being simultaneously intimate and original to thought: as Supernature, as Logos.

But the Logos in man does not move by authority, but by freedom: it does not compel thought. Thought is compelled, or dialectically enslaved, by the forms of systematic, scientific, social, ethical, political, etc., intelligence, by the Adversary of the Logos: an Adversary who fears free thought: whereas the Logos can have no other vehicle in man than free thought, capable of feeling the state of death, insufficiency, and transience of earthly intelligence bound to the numerable processes of reality.

It is important to grasp the opposite polarity of the two impulses: that of modern preconceived knowledge, which needs passive, unfree, analytically systematizable thought, but traces a positive path for it, not contemplating the search for the origin of thought other than the physiological or psycho-physiological, so that the objects of the sciences are their presuppositions thought of as such, in place of the authentic presupposition, thought, which allows them the same positive presumption: and the essential Impulse, which does not manipulate, does not direct, does not enslave thought, because it is its very source, and therefore can flow into it with the utmost truth, insofar as it is free, capable of deciding according to the unconditionality of the innermost movement.

The imminent future of humanity will be decided by the choice that *the spiritual Communities will be able to indicate to the currents of Culture*, between the way of the Logos, that is, of thought liberated according to the Asceticism of Freedom, and the way of Ahriman, which is the thought of illusory dialectical freedom, the thought of the preconceived analysis of Knowledge

and of the spiritual-social sublimation of the Kingdom of Quantity.

Ahriman needs man to identify with thought, to consider it his property and use it as an instrument of inferior egoism, so that he does not recognize its objective power. The Logos, on the other hand, does not influence man, but leaves him free, so that he can free thought from himself and, as I, achieve independence from it, to the point of experiencing its objective cosmic nature. It is this essential experience of Thought that can reunite man with that whose loss has meant, since time immemorial, the crisis of his earthly existence. In this existence, he has the task of pouring out the resurrected cosmic content of thought: the essence.

Some ascetics of the present time claim that this is the age in which man, in order to regain Eden, must once again eat the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge. One cannot but agree: but it is the lucid waking consciousness gained through sensory experience that can attain such food: it would be a grave mistake to regress to states of consciousness that precede the present one. The possibility of new Knowledge is meaningless if we do not know that, now, the operation is the undertaking of the Ego, not, once again, of the astral body replacing the Ego. Hence, true initiatory art is knowing how the Ego arises in the soul and what Light of Life it carries.

The task of regaining the ancient states of consciousness does not consist in regressing towards them, which is to lose them forever, but in moving forward, through the possession of the lucid state of wakefulness awakened by the modern experience of Self-Consciousness.

* * *

In the truly modern experimenter, the inner process of Self-Consciousness, arising through the determination of thought in the mathematical-physical sphere, can rise, through dynamic transitions mediated by the logic of the free element of thought, to a transcendent process. To this responds the cosmic Archetype: the Logos, which has already brought about the union of the human with the Superhuman.

The volitional man, the free builder of his own consciousness, can demonstrate to himself, not dialectically but experimentally, the reality of the Logos: its transcendence in immanence: the absolute power of the Foundation, which cannot but be intimate to the ego. The ego has all the Force within itself: it only has to be itself in order to realize communion with the world according to that Force.

Of course, this is an experience capable of opening up to the unknown, the unlimited, the unexpected: but it is true experience, true renewal, or revolution. Revolution that is not a process of Knowledge cannot but be rhetorical agitation, the unleashing of unfree man. Discovering, inventing, intuiting is always the overcoming of the limits of what is known. The new, the unknown that has the power of renewal, beyond the ordinary mind, beyond the human limit, that is, beyond the human-animal or dialectical limit, is the Logos. And we have seen how the process of consciousness, knowledge, and human action arises from a Foundation that remains unknown to modern man, who presumes himself to be bold in his knowledge. The time has come to recognize this Foundation, since the revelation through which it was once given to man has exhausted its task.

But the way of the Logos is the way of freedom: it does not exercise authority over man, it does not suggest, it does not impose, but appeals to his pure decision. It demands an Asceticism of Freedom, because this is the only thing that gives the ego the possibility of experiencing identity with itself, essential identity with the world, continually expressing itself in the pre-dialectical moment of perception and thought. Such an Asceticism is at the heart of the disciplines presented in this volume.

The disciple actually practices Asceticism without yet knowing its ultimate meaning: and this must be so, because *the human intellect* is closed to *its own cosmic Archetype*. The restoration of the Memory of divine things is connected with the development of the conscious Will of the experimenter, who must discover that Will, in its pure state, is the Force of consecration. This Force connects him with the Logos. He can arouse it through Thought, but at the same time it is Thought itself that moves Thought.

Thought and Will united bring about the profound intention from which man actually moves. The path of knowledge can enable the experimenter to perceive how weak this intention is, despite his supposed spiritual vocation. The absoluteness of intention is an achievement that comes through self-knowledge. Without the awakening of the Memory of the Spirit, there is no discipline that can unite the human with the Superhuman, disenchant duality, and lead the disciple to the Threshold of the New Mysteries.

The disciple who cultivates deep intent can experience the magical moment of absolute lucidity, revealing all the Force to come. For moments, he can realize the Memory of divine things

as the force of pure decision. It is a movement of the ego that does not yet realize the final meaning of Asceticism, but intuits its ultimate content of transmutation: an act that traverses the whole of life, reaching the physical with the power of an irresistible instinct, moving from the pure ego.

This impulse of the ego strikes instantly, from the spiritual to the physical, even without the disciplines having yet opened the way for it. It is a moment of remembrance of the ego, which opens the way for itself, but only instantaneously, as continuity is still impossible for it. Through concentration, continuity can be initiated by the soul, which grasps the meaning of Asceticism indicated by that transcendent moment: a moment actually given by the Spiritual World.

It is the moment of a decision by the ego, whose unifying force must be perceived from the metaphysical to the physical, in order to remember it and make it one's deepest intention. That striking of the ego will, in fact, vanish, only to reappear at other decisive moments as an authoritative original Light, indicating the forgotten intention.

With regard to this possibility, what is lacking in human beings is the power of memory, coherence, and fidelity. This moment of the ego, which can be perceived after extreme tension of the will or pain, requires absolute determination: it tends to disappear after radiating its instantaneous Light: it cannot endure, because the current constitution of man is not prepared to sustain its Power. It indicates a task, but cannot exist as an impulse: its instantaneity can become continuity only in the ascetic assumption. The qualitative content of asceticism, right concentration, right meditation, must be the presence of that direction: the asceticism that corresponds to it, not an asceticism

conditioned by nature. The deep intention must daily construct itself as a renewed intuition of the fleeting direction of the ego. This intention, where it persists, is the measure of the rediscovery of the Memory of divine things and of the Asceticism that truly corresponds to them in the present time.

The sensible world is the symbol of the demand for this inner operation. In it, the spiritual and the real coincide. Its presence conceals the deepest Mystery of the Spirit, the meaning of the highest undertaking of the Universe. Sensory perception is the gateway that is constantly open to man towards such an undertaking. Everything for which man suffers and rejoices, falls ill and dies, is his lack of the inner content of perception, which penetrates him without being met by the ego, or the conscious soul. It is normally met by the sentient-emotional soul, which is averse to knowledge and feigns knowledge through dialectic, while in reality being moved only by desire: hence the real content remains unknown, strengthening the soul's dependence on the series of sensual rather than sensitive processes.

What has been called the world without Logos is the series of everyday perceptions, lacking the inner content for which they are actually formed. This content, as pre-dialectical thought, is always present in perception, but ignored. It is necessary to trace the current of dialectical thought in order to rediscover it and recognize it as true content. It is the living element of the soul, which dialectical consciousness normally eliminates in order to achieve reflective awareness, so that perception and concept, deprived of their objective essence, feed duality. Matter illusorily becomes a real otherness in itself: thus, in cognitive experience, the dialectical man believes he moves from thing to thing, from object to object, while in reality he moves from thought to

thought, or rather, from concept to concept: he ignores the spiritual motion that degrades each time.

Deprived of the living element that urges at the threshold of consciousness, every time it is perceived and thought, the very experience of the physical seeker becomes superstitious: mystical faith in the sensible fact, realism based on the reality of Matter. Only the experience of the supersensible content of perception and of the act of thinking can enable us to understand how much obtuse dogmatism has prejudiced Science's real experience of the physical world.

The experience of the supersensible content of perception and concept is not an initiatory event required of science, but an achievement that belongs to the logic of human culture: an achievement whose absence makes culture anti-human, fomenting the 'maths' necessary for all ranges of political controversy. It is not an initiatory event, but a universal process of Truth, which, however, cannot take place unless the initiatory forces are at work behind it: the forces of the real initiatory Community, not its imitations in the East and West, manipulated by the adversaries of the Logos.

In this sense, the inner responsibility of the seeker today is the choice of the Way. In the age of freedom and dialectical consciousness, even the best can be led astray by esoteric nominalism and choose the path of error, on which they remain stuck for years, for their entire lives: prisoners, despite the sensationalism of mediumship and metaphysics, of the spell of Matter, dominated in their depths by a vision that prevents their liberation, because it is secretly aroused and fed by the intelligence of the Demon of Matter.

Today there are spiritual communities which, despite their metaphysical presuppositions and their undoubtedly moral level, are recognizable to the expert eye as being “occultly” manipulated by the Demon of Matter, who provides them with the knowledge necessary for their spiritualist undertaking, provided that, while appealing to the Logos, they deny the actual presence of the Logos in human becoming and the Asceticism of Freedom that He indicates to man, so that he may rediscover himself from his essence.

In reality, the Asceticism of Freedom, of which the disciplines of concentration presented here are an instrument, leads man to rediscover himself from his essence and not from a metaphysical image of himself, produced by unliberated thought, according to a tragic deception that aims to prevent man from resuming the interrupted path of the Spirit. In order for this path to be resumed, the Logos is present on Earth: the art of the seeker is to recognize its ways, its forms, its Asceticism, capable of reawakening in thought, free from sensible and supersensible constraints, the superhuman impulse, the cosmic source.

Zen and Logos

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Preface

Zen and Logos by Massimo Scaliger, collects a series of writings on Zen that appeared in "Japan" from 196 to 1968, the organic connection and systematic nature of which suggested to the author the present edition in a single volume. The work also includes the essay – Affinity of Ancient Traditions – The Egg of the World and the Bird Hamsa, the first in order, published in *Asiatica*, 1, 1940, which only apparently seems unrelated to the central theme: the subtle but essential relationship will be intuitible where the importance of the "solar" substratum in the formation of that discipline of thought, which through the original Yoga and then the purest Buddhist and Zen ascetics, had no other sense than to prepare for the birth of the concept in the West and simultaneously the luminous presences of the ego in it.

The distinction of the golden element of Zen from that which is the subject modern exegesis in the various forms by which the West has believed it to be encountered and assimilated: from Existentialism to Psychoanalysis, to the "neo-spiritualism" of the Contestation and not least to certain immemorial Traditionalism, is the central argument of the work, alongside that of indicating how the way originally traced by Zen, discernible in that its thwarting of all dialecticism or reflexivity of thought until the irruption of the satori, or of the pure antecedent, according to a facies realizzatimi still legitimately excluding the ego, necessitates today the being exhausted and redeemed, according to the canons of the Way of Thought of the Master of the New Times, by the man capable of experiencing the ego, in the resurrection of thought now bound to the sensible.

The expiration of the extreme-oriental disciplines, with accentuation of characters already ambiguous in themselves, into ecstatic, psychosomatic, sensualistic ways by modern expositors, Western and Oriental, has undermined the possibility of communication from man to the Divine, between Spirit soul and body, between man and man: the absolute priority of the Ego over the incomplete motions of the soul, the absolute antecedence of thought over its determinations, the sacred and salvific sense of the loyalty of the Inferior to the Superior according to Intelligence of Love.

From the living logophanies of a grandiose hyperborean and Mediterranean primordiality, the subject of precisely the first chapter, when approaching the Word (vak) presupposed strict ritual conformity through a liturgy of magical thought, to the Incarnation of the Word itself, the bearer of a new but decisive and unrepeatable inner orientation, to which occultly, in the East, the changing polarity of meditative ways in the various darsanas responds, is traced the path of perpetuity that must be found beyond the forms of its secular appearance, beyond the fallen and lethargic thought and yet concealing within itself intact the secret of its own conversion.

Zen and its satori, where they are spagyrically identified along that path, can be felt as a prologue to the discipline of present-day man's thinking: satori becoming a symbol and promise of the Lightning of the Logos.

I

The Affinity Of Ancient Traditions

The Egg of the World and the Hamsa Bird

In Vedic symbolism, one aspect of the infinite possibilities of realization of Brahma is constituted by the "Primordial Waters," which are taken in their broad cosmogonic signification, in that they are meant to represent the potential energy of the Universal Being acting in nature, that is, in what in the Samkya texts will appear as the second term of creative dualism: Frati. Considering the same symbol in a still higher and transcendent sense, we find that it encompasses both the finite and the infinite world, that which has form and that which can take any form, expressing the aspect of Universal energy in its potential and present totality.

Regardless of the similarities that may be found between this symbolism and that of the "waters" of the Hermetic Tradition, another symbol that reconnects with the former is that of the egg of the world contained in the Primordial Waters. This is an element that has drawn our attention to concordances and points of contact between ancient symbols and myths which authorize us to conceive of an archaic kinship between the Egyptian and Vedic traditions, with reference to a unity of origin of the two cultures and the two corresponding ethnic groups, which, because of the millennia-long pre-existence of the former to the latter, would lead one to consider the ancient civilization air as a legacy or emanation, albeit indirectly, of the Egyptian civilization of the early Dynasties.

Such a hypothesis, which was first suggested to us by the myth of Osiris, having reached the height of his reign, sets out for the East to bring the light of spirituality and civilization to those peoples, seems to want to be confirmed to us by a concordance of data and a series of analogies which, even if they do not lead us to absolute certainty, nevertheless give us the right to consider under a different aspect the archaic Egyptian-Mediterranean civilization which summarizes in essence, as we have pointed out in one of our publications, the major characters of the white culture and race of the primordial, Western, Atlantic, race presents with the Aryans of the East a much more significant kinship than that with the North-Europeans, which has been affirmed by the glottologists of ethnology for about a century. This for us is of fundamental value especially in confirmation of the splendor of the "pre-antique" Egyptian-Mediterranean civilization, of the kinship with the Aryans prior to the coming of the Indo-Iranians to the Aegean basin, and especially in reference to the origins of Rome.

The Brahmànda, the Egg of the World, is a symbol found with similar meanings in the West and in the East: in Mazdeism, as in the tradition of the Druids and in that of the Orphics; it is also the burial stone of the Sun, Omphalos of the solar myth of Dionysus; but originally it presents itself to us as the Egg of Kneph of the Egyptian Tradition. This Egg of the World that Kneph lets out of his mouth symbolizes the manifestation of the Word, the word spoken by the Demiurge about to create the Universe: as the sphere of forces primeval, it refers us, without artifice of comparison, to the Vedic "Primordial Waters," in which is the Egg of the World. Moreover, thinking of the original Atlantic-Egyptian-air unity, one gladly recalls the archaic sculptures of North America representing the creative eternity in

the form of a serpent with an enormous spheroid in its mouth. It is beyond bold to see an analogy of this serpent with the one that in Hinduism symbolizes the primordial power of Kundalini, the Sakti secretly animating the force of generation.

Here other symbols with intimately correlative meanings are grafted in. To the cosmic egg of Orphism, expressing the mystical sense of initiatory rebirth, is next the symbol of the apple and the tree. From the tree of universal life springs the fruit that confers immortality: a motif that in almost identical form is found in the legend of the Hesperides and in the Saga of Mag Meli. But to the symbol of the tree is connected that of a winged (eagle, swan, dove); and the symbolic tree of Iran, which contains all seeds and all possibilities of creation, is also called the "eagle tree." Thus later, in Matthew's Gospel (XIII:31-32) the kingdom of heaven will be symbolized by a tree born from a seed cast by man in his "field": on the branches of it will perch the birds of the air.

But a bird, the Swan, the instrument of Brahma, is that which hatches the Egg of the world. Thus the eagle, after which a degree of Mithriac initiation is named, according to the Iranian tradition signifies the "word," that is, the manifesting verb, Va k, corresponding to the Vedic figuration of the bird Hamsa (the Swan); and the doves of Homeric myth are those that bring Zeus the drink of immortality, while the birds of the island of Leuca are the spirits of Greek heroes. The identity of the motif is well evident. This winged creature, which precisely because its faculty to fly, to carry itself above the earth in the celestial planes, to move in full freedom in every sense, can express in the form of a symbol a series of cosmic, universal and spiritual meanings, is found first and with completeness of motifs in the Egyptian hieroglyphic. It is the hawk that, as the emblem of royalty,

precedes the king in all ritual representations: as the king's protective genius, it is the hawk flying or at rest, as in the statue of Chephren, in which it wraps around the nape of the king's neck with outstretched wings. But the hawk is also the god of the royal family: in the "city of hawks," Heraconpolis, the kings of the First Dynasty raise a temple to the Hawk: this, then, as a deity, becomes Hor and later Horo of classical myth. Moreover, since to remote Egyptian spirituality goes back the representation of the soul as a breath departing from the body man with extreme breath, it, which – mind you – in such a conception corresponds to the Hellenic "mobile" and eternal, is by such characters represented in the paintings as a bird with a human head, fluttering over the inanimate body. But the term Hamsa itself means, in Sanskrit, both swan and soul.

At this point, therefore, one can find a remarkable point of contact with the Hindu doctrines: for since we are dealing with "the soul," that is, with something which, referring simply to the subtle state of being, and which therefore in most cases does not participate in the immortal nature..of the spirit, corresponding to the state of Buddhi, that is, to the supramental intellect (*atman-purusa*), it falls fitting to recall that in the same way that, according to the Western Hermetic Tradition, the major task of the mystic consists in realizing the dominion of the soul over the spirit and the body, that is, in realizing the dominion of the Divine in the human, so also for the Vedic tradition, and especially for the Vedantic tradition, the purusa must make itself the ruler and unifier of the prakrti (vital world, nature). Now, one symbol that recurs to represent such conquest by the spirit is given by the image of riding the bird Hamsa, or the swan. For a more precise understanding of such a concept, in correspondence with the Egyptian representation of the soul as a winged being,

and that for the initiatory goal it is necessary to dominate and ride (Eastern conception) – which means obedience of the anima to a higher virtue, the spirit – it is useful to draw on that yoghic doctrine which in its pragmatic aspect gives the precise proof of these correspondences.

The power of Kundalini dormant in the mūladhara-cakra, that is, in the nerve plexus that is at the base of the, once awakened by initiatory virtue, is a current that rises along the spine pet a subtle pathway that is the susumni, until it reaches the sahasradala-cakra at the top of the head, the seat of the divine spirit (*ātman*). Thanks to this inner regeneration that makes man a "twice-born" being, dvija, the soul is freed from all the bonds that may still exist with the bodily condition and encounters a solar ray—that is, an emanation of the spiritual sun that is Brahma himself, considered in its universal value. We return, as we see, to the conception of the Egg of the world contained in those primordial Waters now reached by the sādhaka who finds in them his own universal origin.

One of the most powerful means of reaching such a stage of initiation consists in mastering the dual current idà-pingalà, with respect to which susumnà represents unity, by means of that phase of the internalized exhalation that is the Kevala-Kumbhaka (the absolute retension) in which is the duality of the inhale-exhale is suspended and the domination of something that normally fluctuates and escapes the domain of the /o is realized. Regardless of the viability of such an experience, we are interested in fixing the meaning of the symbol corresponding to the sense of the dominion of that subtle form of being that for being highly mobile, fluctuating, volatile, is represented by Egyptian tradition as a bird.

In fact, riding Hamsa corresponds exactly to that mastering of the dual neuro-magnetic current, idà-pingalà, which is accomplished by mastering the two phases of breathing of which the inhale is called Ham and the exhale Sa. The operaGon technically must have rhythmic correspondence with the letters of the sacred syllable OM, which, while measuring the time of breathing, simultaneously resonates in the heart cakra giving the Sadhaka a way to reunite with the transcendent original Word. The Na-àavinàùpanishaà (Rgveda) clarifies the relationship between this mantra and the symbol of the Swan: "The letter A is considered as the right wing of the bird Hamsa, the U as the left, the M as the tail, and the Ardhamatra (half-meter) as its head." In the same Nadavindu it is also said, "A Yigin who rides the Hamsa (thus meditating on the AUM) is not is touched by the influences of Karma, nor by millions of sins. "

Also reconnected to the symbol of Hamsa is the Solar Tradition whose original homeland predynastic and early Dynastic Egypt, heir to the mystery, metaphysical and ethno-spiritual heritage of the North-Atlantic lineage. In addition to the "solar" elements that are traced in the motif of man's domination of subtle duality implemented by virtue of his spiritual principle (àtman'purusa), is to note the sense of the tradition that there was originally only one caste, called Hamsa. Clearly, this refers to the existence of a single lineage that was supposed to possess normally and spontaneously the spiritual attributes designated by the name of Hamsa: these were thus men who all indiscriminately realized the dominion of the inhale-exhale, that is, of all duality. It had to be a lineage familiar with the unitary vision of the cosmos (vidya), overcoming the spirit-matter antithesis, realizing the synthesis of the two priestly and royal powers, and therefore the effective penetration of the Divine into the human.

Such features cannot help but make one rethink those "man-divines" of whom the Egyptian Tradition speaks to us alluding to the "first eta", to "Eta of being", that is, to that to which the memory of the remote and original Atlantean splendor must be traced. The Atlantids were in fact a single race, embodying a single superior type of humanity : the divisions into four great sub-races in Egyptian history and into four castes in Indian history thus represent the differentiation established after this one original race, touching new lands, encountered different ethnic types with whom it had to coexist and in contact with whom it therefore established its law which manifested itself as a hierarchical, sacred and imperial order.

The connection of the Hamsa symbol with elements of the Solar Tradition is also evident in Vedic texts. Thus we read in the Rgveda: "Eight were the sons of Aditi who were born from her body; with seven she went to the Gods: she chased away the bird (the Sun). With seven sons Aditi entered the first eta (of the Gods). It brought again the bird now for procreation, now for death. "Here while we find the reference to the birth and death of the living, whose life the Sun presides over, is note the meaning of the number seven corresponding to that of the nerve plexuses, or centers of life (cakras) through which, awakened Kundalini force thanks to the Kevala-Kumbhaka, passes the current, susumna, generated by the domain of idà-pingalà (which is symbolized by the image of riding the Swan),

The dominion of Hamsa thus signifies in an even broader sense the conquest of a cosmic dignity: it is the conquest of the Sun accomplished by the Indo-Iranic hero Mithras, in whom is to be discerned the Egyptian solar god Gold. The relationship between the seven main centers of life, corresponding to seven

nerve plexuses-as it turns out with a striking identity of motifs even in the Western Hermetic-Alchemical Tradition-also results from the distinction that some Eastern mystics make of seven planes of being, which are the seven spiritual Lokas, or worlds within the body Kala Hamsa, "the swan outside of time and space," which changes into the "swan in time" when it assumes the form of Brahma instead of that of Brahman.

Here the symbolism acquires dignity that cannot fail to strike, involving analogies, correspondences and affinities of traditions hitherto considered foreign to each other. The enlightenment of the seven centers of life in the yogin, in fact, leads to the acquisition of the third eye, or "frontal eye," which summarizes all the possibilities of vision of the two common eyes (which express another physiological aspect of the duality that must be resolved). This overcoming has, moreover, a value of conquest of eternity in that the right eye, corresponding to the Sun, looks into the future, the left eye, cor-responding to the Moon is turned to the past: the frontal eye corresponds to the present, which, in the world of bodily manifestation, exists for an elusive instant, comparable, in the spatial order, to the dimensionless geometric point; therefore, a glance of this third eye is capable of overcoming and nullifying every aspect or manifestation: which is symbolically expressed when is said that it "reduces everything to ashes." This is also the reason why such an eye in essence cannot be represented by any physical organ. Note, therefore, how even the possibility of rising by riding the Hamsa bird is given by the dual but simultaneous motion of the wings corresponding by analogy to the alternate rhythm of the Hamsa breath, to the state of unification. This symbolism will be repeated in that of the two-faced Janus, with two faces, one facing the past, the other the

future, but whose true face, the one that looks at the present, is neither one nor other of those visible.

Now it is not difficult to discern in the symbol of this unified domain of two forces, two possibilities, two ways of experiencing life, that intimate and absolute power of the "solar" lineage that built the great empires us from among mists of prehistory. Egypt, India, China, Iran. Absolute power was given by the unity of the two principles, spiritual and temporal, mystical and heroic, sacred and warrior, superhuman, in the person of a Head of a Monarch, an Emperor. It was about the duality resolved in the One: a theme of perfection that is realized both in man, and in action, in politics, in the Impetus. This unitary conception leads back to the very essence of the Solar Tradition as the basis of social organization, as first realized in Egypt: the Sun is in fact, in the world of manifestation, the major symbol of the unity of the Divine which, in its original and unmanifest vastness, is Brahma containing the Egg of the World, identical in all the Metaphysical Traditions of prehistory and protohistory.

II

Zen and Western Interpretations

Can one say that Zen has entered, through books and displays, into culture temporarily? Because precisely this from the point of view of Zen is unacceptable: that it should become a fact of culture, that it should become dialectical.

That inner quality which still lives in some men of the Far East, in some Japanese ascetic-thinkers, and can arise by volitional denuding of thinking determination in some rare Westerners, cannot become dialectical without renouncing its own nature. The force of Zen was inexpression, not by renunciation of expressing itself in sensibly perceptible forms, but by being able to express itself with immediacy without renouncing its own element of life, that is, an unspeakable by which the human is perpetually immersed in the superhuman, as in its foundation: even when it is unaware of it. It can be called a force of inexpression precisely in that expression is now identified with dialectics.

From Plato to Gentile, the meaning of dialectic has been noble, because responding to a true actualized as such in the soul: signifying movement of thought, becoming in which being is removed from its dead otherness, or fixity, as being that simultaneously is and thinks itself.

It is very likely that Marx also saw dialectics as a living motion, although he fell into a rather singular oversight, seeing dialectics as so identical to matter that he did not distinguish the

thinking from the thinking and therefore did not perceive the autonomy of inner motion that allowed him to immerse himself in the becoming of matter, historical, economic, social, etc. But what happened next was even more tragic for human culture: the inner experience of those initiating thinkers, for whom dialectics was simply the form of a living thought, gradually faded and died out, and all that remained of dialectics was the dead bare, the logical-speculative plot, with which all those who have nothing to say, but must say something because, by trade or vanity, they must perform analyses and syntheses of analyses, they must architect concepts: for which they have a connection that escapes them. If this connecting force they were to try to grasp, they would have to transform themselves: they would have to begin by ceasing to chatter philosophically, or aesthetically-mindedly, they would have to drop all that refined expressiveness that can deal with everything, with expert language-sometimes so eccentric and precise as to seem humorous- but in essence grasps nothing. That it grasps nothing is evident from the consequences.

Did Zen, then, penetrate into this culture? It must be said that if it has there, that has only happened on the condition of being part of the analytic-systemic structure of that culture and adapting it. Lately we have even seen an attempt to link Zen with psychoanalysis (cf. D. T. Suzuki, Erich Fromm and Richard De Martino, *Zen Buddhism and Psychoanalysis*, New York, 1963), as, moreover, Hubert Benoit had already attempted in a more refined form to reconnect Zen with psychoanalysis gendering the "letting go" with Jung's psychology. The effort to bring Zen into Western knowledge has taken various forms, sometimes propitiated by the authorized bearers of Zen themselves, from D. T. Suzuki to Lu K'uan Yu.

If it is therefore penetrated there, for that very reason it is difficult to recognize it, since it is placed in a guise that implies its substantial elimination, that is, its reduction to an intelligibility that does not admit variations of the mental nature of which it is an expression, but only discursive modification. It is a matter of adapting Zen to oneself. To know it is something else. The structure of Zen is such that beginning to know it means movement of one's inner nature according to forces with which it has lost contact: movement that cannot fail to be opposition to the personal nature expressed in ordinary thinking, in dialectical thinking: that which presumes to reduce Zen to this. Therefore, either the one or other.

The agreement with the purity of true things, with the rhythms of heaven and earth, from which springs that wabi-sabi style in Zen expresses itself as an attitude regarding the outer world, in essence is the spontaneity in which man's true nature begins to manifest itself. It is the newfound naturalness insofar as one is capable of independence from nature one normally is : that whose sustaining force is the dialectic. Whereas Zen is dialectical.

The contradiction is therefore this: that one would need to know Zen asceticism in order not to risk reducing it lifelessly to the level of one's own abstract thinking, but in order to free thinking from abstractness one would already need to know one of the keys to Zen. A Zen text says, "Truth is not difficult and leaves no choice between two orders of things" (Shinjì-mey of III Patriarch Szosan).

Everything in the West expresses a kind of nihilistic attitude, from abstractionism to existentialism, from the revolt of symbolic logic against philosophy, to the systematic anti-intellectualism of technology, up to certain manifestations of non-conformist and

anti-conservative violence of the so-called "burned generation," can be discerned as an obscure attempt at liberation from the rhetoric that is now imprinted as a deformation in human nature. Certain current forms of self-destruction are unconscious expressions of an anti- dialectical vocation, by means of which one would like to assert oneself resolutely against one's own nature, when in fact it is nature itself that once again asserts itself: but not nature as a free and pure force, but as the instinctiveness dominating the soul thanks to its dependence on cerebrality.

Actually from the straits of reflexive thinking it is difficult to get out: there is no anarchoid, or revolutionary, or nihilistic attitude that has the power to break the iron circle of abstractness. Precisely such a problem could be answered by Zen, should it encounter in it sufficient awareness of the condition that tends toward the exhaustion of dialectics by means of another kind of dialectics. That is, it would benefit from recognizing that there is not enough force to deny to the end what arouses nihilism or revolt: in fact, it is simply mobilized a mental attitude devoid of internal vitality, not force. Force in truth does not need attitudes. This where Zen could be orienting.

Ordinary rationalist thinking can hardly penetrate the meaning of Zen doctrines, precisely because inevitably set forth in images and ideas, or in interpretations, which, when they are authentic, concern an unrepeatable movement of thought: unless already the knower has in himself such a movement as a possibility ready to be actualized as soon as the proper stimulus is given to it. That such movement is unrepeatable is precisely the character of Zen teaching: of that which is traditional and true, not of that which is already adapted to the demands of doctrinal

and systematic exposition. Unrepeatable in that it is perpetually new in its identity with this.

With the art of meditation, something is not transmitted from a text or a master, but what is already there in the disciple or knower is kindled. Unrepeatability unspeakability must be protected, as they accompany what is said: otherwise what is said is not true. A metaphysical truth must be carried as a life force if it is realized. Of Zen only those who have it can speak.

On the other hand, a misunderstanding that dominates Western culture is the distinction of the two moments of theory and practice. It is ordinarily believed, for example, that one can formulate a theoretical program and then carry it out, as if from the abstract formulation could arise an action other than that of the one who already bears it in himself as a thought endowed with life: which lacking, no program is ever realized, only that which in itself actually bears the performer as personal nature being realized. Actually there is no passage from abstract theory to action, because from abstract thought there is no exit: except, of course, in the case where theory is the abstract counterpart of a practice that one already possesses, precisely because one has in it thought in motion: which is not the gesture, or the outward act, but what moves in them: like the wisdom in the limbs of the farmer who spades or in the hands of the gardener who tends flowers or the mechanic who tunes, an engine: which is the same impulse as the painter who creates or the thinker who thinks. Creative impulse, because unaware of its own arising.

How does the unspeakable, the unrepeatable, the impossible to include in a form, of Zen emerge? In the same way: in art of gardening, flower arrangement, fencing, tea ceremony, painting,

archery, judo, meditation. We have said "in the same way," but let it be clear that we do not establish any equation: for it is indeed the same way, but there is a profound distinction between the two possibilities, of a depth perhaps unbridgeable. Because, by creating - and assuming that he creates - the Westerner does not know what he is doing, that is, he enacts inner forces that he does not know and which, when he presumes to know, he actually flatly or superficialises in sublime aesthetic or psychological analyses, which indeed of the movement of those forces grasp nothing, but only the sensible and rational extrinsic: from which it is not possible to trace the inner connection. While the ascetic or Zen disciple meditates: his action, artisanal or artistic, athletic or social, is only is form of the meditation. The content is form.

Meditating, the Zen disciple knows what he is doing-so that, knowing the nature of the force set in motion, he operates in life without contradicting it: he operates in such a way that he does not oppose or alter the force to which he owes the inner light; rather, he ensures that the inner action continues as spontaneity in the operations of life. It does not demand morality from the world or from men, knowing full well that everyone obeys, whether he knows it or not, the law which dominates him or the law by which he consciously agrees. He is outside the rules, outside the laws, but he rejects nothing to the outward necessity that these humanly entail. He meditates: when this impersonal action of his, which is a non-action of the ego, becomes extrinsic in the world, the consequence of it is morality. It is not an end he sets for himself, an aim of his acting, but an objective effect, about which he is not concerned, knowing full well that it is more important the force than its product.

Moral action is not that which obeys a morality, but is that which has behind it supra-sensible forces, which cannot be crystallized into rules, or into systems. It is the human form of such forces. Rules and systems apply to those who cannot draw directly on force and must resort to external mediations to regulate themselves. It is important that the mediators of the morality of the mass are bearers of morality, not moralists: for morality does not arise from knowledge of moral laws, but from supersensible virtue whose extrinsicity is then identifiable by the inquirer in sets of laws: which can orient the individual still unable to ask his inner being directly for guidance. No moral law creates morality. Thus no theory creates practice.

The Westerner who can grasp something of Zen must not make the mistake of believing that he has thereby already entered such asceticism and that it is now only a matter of cultivating certain attitudes and practicing special thought exercises. One of the temptations of the invalid style of a "quick method" of becoming yogis, or Zen disciples, or "men as power," is expressed in the confusion between representation and realization. Especially among our young people we have seen some who, ordinarily depressed or uncentered, and gave in search of some inner tonic in vain demanded of their own will and finally one evening by adventure they had in their hands J. Evola's *Yoga of Power*: in the morning they awakened men as power," or "absolute individuals," and from that moment they began to regard others with sovereign contempt, the others, still afflicted with human weaknesses, which instead they suddenly overcame due to the fact that they had been feeding on representations of the kind of tantric initiate, such as Evola described with fascinating style, not imagining how many weak, ex- abrupt galvanized by the kundalinic slamming and snaking, gratuitously

would count themselves among the overtakers of the human. Of course we joke, because the healthy man is responsible for himself, anyway: he knows how to deal with strong food: he takes that much that fortifies him and takes only what he can assimilate or master.

Discourse, this, by which we mean to insist that one does not come out of abstract thought unless one is able to operate already in thought in such a way as to grasp its abstractness and to grasp the reason for it, so as to experience thought la where it has not yet fallen into abstractness. But this possibility cannot be offered by the Zen doctrines that have arisen and been formed for a human type that has not yet fallen into rationalistic abstractness. Certain forms of dialectic of intellectualism which the Zen masters reproached their disciples and against which they severely warned them, were not Western-type rationalism, they were not that modern abstractness which grasps nothing of the inner world, but grasps the chemical-physical plane very well, indeed penetrates it and measures it exactly and translates it into mighty mechanical constructions. In Zen there is nothing about this thought: or rather there would be everything to understand its secret and ultimate meaning, but the fact is that only a thought already redeemed of abstractness could enter Zen.

In truth the intellectualism that was being combated by the strict custodians of Zen had nothing to do with the intellectualism of the modern rationalist: it was simply the normal arising of the mental bound to the lower nature against the higher mental, open to its own inner source, with which it tended to identify itself to the point of an extinction of this, which would leave the individual principle operating in its naked purity. It was the way possible to a mental capable of relation to

the world of the senses, balanced and active, because dominated by the supramental principle: a way unsuitable for the mental that is fully immersed in the world of the senses, so as to exclude any supra-mental action that does not involve removal of the functional relation itself. Actually has no other solution than to be removed, a relation that has become nature. Zen can liberate thought that has not in depth bound itself.

It makes no sense to say "liberated thought" for a thought that has not known the dry and deep constraints of the sensible. So? Is the liberation of Zen perhaps what was in secret asceticism prepared in the Far East for the age when the West, declining, would touch thickest darkness, the darkness of abstract thought? For in truth there is a heroism of those who endure it. This arid, geometric, beaming and yet disanimated thought is the sign of a force: it is the sign of an encounter and struggle with the brute power of earthliness, from which arise the realm of machines, industries, economy, the petrified forests of concrete and asphalt, the swirling movement of vehicles of land of sea and sky. It is the constraint that so much a powerful thought, even in its lightless geometrism, can endure. Of this thought one must not get rid: for this thought is the very force of liberation. It is necessary for it itself to grasp in itself, in its own inward movement, the force that for now it addresses only to the exteriority, whether sensible or non-sensible: an operation that it can perform only within its own process, outside any other mediation.

While the current expositors, the current European-American heralds of Zen are not at all concerned with the status of this thought, not even their own: they do not perceive how their thought somehow enforces the wisdom of Mahayana. Deprived of gnoseological caution, they publish works in which Zen is

casually interpreted in various ways: orthodoxyically dialecticized, it is nevertheless adapted to the abstract dimension of thought desirous of metaphysical framing whose strength for now is only systematicity, but which cannot avoid reducing to its own abstractness, that is, to a lifeless plane, a knowledge that is justified solely by its expressing life: the unspeakable, the unrepeatable, that which can be intuited as the force that moves the plant world, animate beings and the earth, and colors the sky and is the rhythm of days and seasons. Something that modern man deduces as life but does not experience. Zen presents itself as that which experiences it and gives way to experience it: but not to those who have taken life away from thought, whose peculiarity therefore abstractness. Zen has been given to a human type not yet divested of transcendence. The modern Westerner, then, is a divided one: this his strength, but equally his limitation. He cannot access Zen except through a conversion into himself: an operation he can accomplish only in his own thinking process, not by taking something from outside and reducing it to the limitedness to which such a process is abstracted in him.

What can the modern Westerner learn from Zen? Only what responds to the mechanical, quantitative, rationalistic condition according to which is his thinking is shaped. Not being able to grasp the element of life, supra-rational and undialectic, of that asceticism, he detaches from the discourse that is discursive garb only because of its indiscursive content and therefore obedient to a sublimely a- logical canon, the words and concepts—let us grant even the images—that have no other connection than that content, and such words and concepts he connects by means of what they mean to him, according to all other vision, according to his nominalistic association. We could write in golden letters a golden sentence, but a reseller, for example, would find in it no

other value than that of the precious metal, translatable into money.

This Zen is was brought into the public square and everyone found a way to appropriate it, or rather believed to appropriate it: from Jungian analysts to judoizing "bodybuilders." Thus, for example, judo, detached from the ascetic justification became a mechanical art demanding only some technique of concentration on muscular facts, estranged (i.e., abstracted) from the sensible force in the body that builds muscles: so, on the plane of an art reduced to mere mechanical technique, we is saw the last Tokyo Olympics the Dutch champion beat the Japanese judo champion. Or one is saw one of the most esteemed expositors of Zen, Alan W. Watts, author of works translated into the world's major languages, at a private meeting in Rome two years ago, reveal in a moment of mystical confidence with his listeners, how the sector, that is, dazzling enlightenment, can be accessed through mescaline, "It depends on who gives it" he seems to have mysteriously warned. He might also have said, "It depends on who uses it." Which is up and down the same thing: before which we cannot but feel the bones of the ancient custodians of Zen quivering, of those Patriarchs who beat hard and unexpectedly, with terrible and watchful love toward the ever-derailing disciples..

Certain beatings and backhands had a rectifying function: sometimes enlightening. As of the text certain sacrosanct blows that soaked modern parents no longer know how to give their children. Extracts of cactus, or of hemp, or ergot, mescaline, psilocybin, or other ingredients of present-day psychochemistry, can, by a physiological action to which is is foreign to the will of the subject, bring to the border of sensory perception, la where in

the process of perceiving deeper forces of the psyche flow, ordinarily unperceived by consciousness, precisely so that perception may be normal and give that material on which thought must operate: To whose quality and asceticism is due the possibility of descending into that depth and conquering in a lucid and volitional form what subconsciously occurs within perceiving. As we said more above, this asceticism of thought, precisely insofar as it opens to the soul contact with its supersensible forces, is a moral way. The way of mescaline is an immoral way, because it does not open the way to the suprasensible, mistaking the sub-sensible for such: in this sense it exerts an orienting influence on all spiritual displaced persons who aspire to a quick method of becoming seers, or mystics, or fascinators of women, a method that consists in ingesting a substance and waiting for the effects it, salient from the organism.

From a sensible process, therefore, a supersensible event should arise, without the subject putting anything of his own into it, because the substance is provided nature or the apothecary, and the operators are the stomach, gastric juices and intestines. One sits in an armchair and waits: after a while he sees rivers of gems, golden suns, crystalline mountains, luminous prairies. He sees them, but he is not in them. He brings back a pleasant feeling of them, to which he then loves to return. Interesting as a psycho-chemical experience, undoubtedly useful to psychiatrists for the treatment of cases of neurosis or hysteria: but what has this to do with Zen, which by the way can be said to be the art of pure immediacy, that is, of lucid ridding oneself of all mediation, not only physical but also metaphysical? How is possible is such a distortion? To exchange a "seeing" that is mere standing as inert spectators, conditioned by a cactus extract, waiting for the perception of the Dao, is simply ridiculous. For that seeing takes

place not at a supersensible level, but as conditioned by the bodily, sub-sensible sphere, in the sense that, according to Zen Buddhism, the perceivable world is not an absolute reality, but a mode of the manifestation of being, which lies between a higher and a lower world, both imperceptible to the senses. The appearing real has two boundaries, one above and one below, in an upper world and an underworld: both of which are unconscious to man. Hence with ease modern man places in the unconscious mixed the one and the other. But we must not forget that it is always the lower that tends to reduce to its own level what is higher: it is precisely a play of the underworld make man confuse the two, so that every extra-normal experience is mistaken for spiritual experience.

Spiritual experience is only that by which the soul is transformed by higher soul forces and, egoic vision, injects knowledge and compassion into the world. Only an inner light, consciously and with strenuous effort achieved, can become fraternity. Such light is not gratuitous, it cannot come by ingestion of substances suggested by brilliant parlor "zenists." Undoubtedly there may be those who have their inner experience by means of mescaline: everyone is free to use whatever chemical means he wants, to shake the physical body and derive extra-sensible passages from it; but then he should not speak of Zen. Because the inner experience does not have it directly, as pure immediacy, achieved by insistent ascetic will, but through the body, making the body mediate what the body cannot mediate without being already in the framework of psychopathology, because the body is here to mediate the earthly experience, or sensible experience, from the perception of earth and sky to that of spaghetti all'americana with truffles. The body as a physical organism is not interested in the supersensible, because it is all

structured by it. The body has nothing to know, because it has everything in itself: its operation according to the Tao consists in being harmoniously in the sensible in order to provide the right material for thought and consciousness, which alone, where they avail themselves of their undialectic force, reconnect with the supersensible.

Ultimately, then, it must be said that Zen defends itself, because through the interpretations of its modern expositors it allows itself to be grasped even less than in traditional expositions. What circulates is unlikely to be Zen: and this is a great help to the Westerner: that he does not find what he thinks he finds merely because he reads it, or because he can reduce it to one's own abstract conception. But it is likewise a protection of the secret of Zen, so that those who truly seek it can find it outside the bookish adaptations whose motive is often a commercial objective.

It is good that the researcher does not find what he easily seeks, because then only can begin to understand what he wants and wisely direct his search. He must not give up understanding the meaning of the situation of thought from which he takes his starting point. As we mentioned, from abstractness one cannot pass to living thought, for the simple reason that any passage is abstract itself, if the conversion of thought does not occur in the ambit in which abstractness itself perperses. Therefore, one cannot have confidence in the current expositions of Zen, as well as in the possibility that certain texts are truly understood, assuming that they are essential texts and even taking into account that the basic and secret texts of Zen are not yet known even by their repositories. One cannot have confidence and this pessimism is healthy.

The Westerner's limit or strength-boundary logic: he cannot hold this to be his whole strength and then ignore it when he is presented with certain doctrines which, even if they excite his imagination, do not respond to his tradition. We used to say that the strength of the Zen ascetic is to do something in the world insofar as he takes his starting point from communion with immediately operating in him as "first thought" operates in the world: he therefore knows what he is doing. Logic should lead the Westerner to know what he does when he thinks. The problem of knowledge, philosophically, has always concerned the modalities of knowing, not confess itself as a possibility that to be dialectical must necessarily arise from the "undialectical." The occidental today faces situations that dialectics no longer solves : they do not require its movement in the thought, or in words, but its movement in thought: in the movement that thought already is, but ignores.

Abstractness must be resolved within its own process, i.e., its forming in the very ambit of its dialectical expression according to a content that seems to be that of the thought object, but is in essence the force of egoic nature grasping thought as lifeless. Abstractness can be resolved within its own process because there is a moment of its forming in which it still is living thought: thought dies as abstractness because one moment earlier – of an intemporal momentariness – it is alive. From here one can take the steps: from the living moment. To proceed from the dead state of thought and project it onto things is to grasp nothing: as is now happening in all fields, despite the enormous analytico-systematic force of this thought.

We return therefore to the contradiction initially hinted at. Zen is the resolver of abstractness, but with abstract thinking one

does not enter Zen: one believes one enters it, because one manipulates it dialectically to the point of pointing to mescaline as a means of achieving satori. For the solution of contradiction to the modern Westerner is necessary a proper use of one's logical thinking. As we have shown in some of our studies, the modern rationalist can find in the process of one's thinking the living sources of rationality : within oneself the limit that one ordinarily projects outside oneself is overcome. It can be resolved in self-consciousness the opposition between being and existence, between thinking and acting, which the great ascetic-thinkers of the Mahayana and particularly the Zen Masters did not have the problem overcoming by action in their own inwardness. To the modern Westerner, the way of resolution is shown by the very movement of thought that binds itself to sensible contents: the force of such thought is "materializing" or abstracting itself because the solution of materialization or abstractness is its liberation: the fulfillment of its experience in the sensible. It is therefore a liberation that is accomplished, not by fleeing life, but in the midst of exterioristic and mechanistic experience, in the midst of a culture contradictive with the spirit, because still not truly interpenetrated with thought: therefore not real. Only this liberated thought can penetrate the secret of matter. But the force of its own liberation cannot learn it from doctrines that did not know such a fall: it can learn it and have it only from itself. Only its own enactment of liberation in this can be, at a later time, enlightened by Zen as by a shining of its own light.

One does not go from dialectical thought to the supersensible, one does not come out of abstract thought: spiritless thought cannot have spirit as its object. Conversion can only be internal to the thought that is to be converted, it cannot come from outside, because everything that can be understood by

abstract thought is necessarily adapted by it, reduced to its own measure: hence even the idea of one's own conversion, so that it can ever come into being. And this is the tragic situation of thought in the West, which explains everything and grasps nothing: because it is incapable of grasping itself. Whereas it is in the logic of its conscious process, that it finally grasps itself: returns living, because only living can solve the problems that abstract thought no longer solves. Having resolved in thought the opposition between essence and substance, having traced all determination back to the original inner act, the question of the transition from theory to practice, from thinking to acting, from idea to life, no longer has reason to exist: it no longer gives. Acting and non-acting and vice versa. In fact, from merely rational thought one does not move to action because it in its inanimation is a sphere in which no movement is possible, while from living, or essential, thought there is no moving toward, other, because it is already present movement in alterity: which therefore is no longer alterity.

III

Nishida's Actuality

Nishida Kitaro's thought perhaps represents in the Far East the most serious meeting between the ancient mystical vision and the modern experience of concepts. This experience in the West is fulfilled on the condition that spirit is extinguished, metaphysics disappear. (It still remains to be understood, however, what Hegel, Fichte, Schelling really meant by the language of philosophy: it remains to be seen whether their systems did not express the last gleam of the light of a thought still capable of plunging into the supra-sensible: that which is now is "nothingness," precisely because it has become abstraction. That which escapes Sartre, as it does all those who in the process of thought cannot discern the annihilation of the error they seek).

Certain Eastern thinkers, children of the ancient metaphysical vocation, can make the bridge between the metaphysical and the physical, between the mystical and the realist vision, provided they do not allow themselves to be entangled in what Western philosophizing has recently fallen into: dialectics as an end in itself. Dialectics not is thought in its creative moment, not is spirit, but its contingent determination.

The dialectic that is automated and becomes research, vision of the world, philosophy or anti-philosophy, idealism or anti-idealism, spiritualism or materialism, is not the vehicle of the spirit, not the vehicle of truth, but the expressive process that has taken the hand of man: that is, the expressive process devoid of inner content; the process of man powerless express his own

essence now, but only capable of expressing his own powerlessness. The terms circulating in philosophical literature, "being", "existing", "foundation", "essence", "phenomenon", "nothingness", "truth", "logism" etc. are in truth empty words: they say nothing. Behind them there is nothing. It is only the dialectical automatism clad in the nature of a certain philosophizing person: who probably philosophizes because he does not know what thought: he does not know what something he knows by.

So, Nishida meets in Japan as a hope, as the indication of a way. A son of ancient metaphysical lineage, he sees the world, the world's scenery, nature, history with an eye free of dialecticism. He knows philosophy, but remains metaphysical: he understands that there is only a real physical world, but such a world in its concreteness is metaphysical. Reality is metaphysical and only for that reason can be physical: the ancient Taoist masters, the Zen masters, the Buddhist ascetics were right, discerning the "emptiness," as essence. But theirs was only vision bestowed by the gods, thanks to an art of contemplation whose secret is lost. However, was vision in ancient times resurfaces in the child of this time as conscious thought. In conscious thought one can continue the art ancient vision: this is the meaning of science. But conscious thought loses contact with spirit, from which it nonetheless derives, its activity becomes rhetorical, renounces internal creative virtue, falls into the sphere of quantity is overwhelmed by formalism, by methodology, by technique. This is the danger of modern science, but it is the danger of the world: that truth is limited to the measurable, that it is not reality, but something that is abstracted from reality: that it is wrongly beginning to be assumed to be all of reality. For one can no longer grasp what is beyond the measurable, there is no longer

movement of thought for it: whereas thought should already be recognized as the presence of what is not measurable. Hence thought should be known: the thought by which in truth everything is decided. The intimate unknowable.

"But," Nishida observes, "thought cannot be known if it merely philosophizes: its movement is not philosophy, but that which as an inner act has nothing behind it except the limitlessness of spirit. Philosophy is a product, not a condition. Knowing is the living moment of the spirit, but it is not known by those who limit themselves to philosophizing: unless philosophizing is the garb of pure experience, junsui keiken, that is, of the pure experiencing of thought.

Far Eastern philosophy has given us an interesting school: the so-called "Kyoto School," Kyólo-ha, which arose at that University. The opening to Western philosophies in Japan began in the first decades of this century, taking place under the sign of regular contact with the great Germanic thinkers, Kant, Fichte, Schelling, Hegel, with the phenomenology of Husserl and the existentialism of Heidegger and Jaspers. The "Kyoto School" is headed by Nishida's thought and can be considered the most vivid aspect of Japanese philosophy, precisely because of what has been said: for not having lost the logos in logic, for not having lost the lifeblood of ideas in dialectics: for having kept in touch with the forces of ancient inspiration, while penetrating the world of concepts and trying to grasp being in rational activity.

Nishida's work, *Zen no Kenkyù*, is fundamental, because it can be considered the "positive" synthesis of the different currents of Western thought. He understood it best, because he was able to distinguish dialectics from the pure movement thought that is not dialectical and makes dialectics true by its light. The "Kyoto

School" is undoubtedly along the lines of such thinking, although Nishida's successor, Tanabe Hajime, opening up to the philosophy of science, reevaluated Kantian teleology, simultaneously embracing the phenomenism of Edmund Husserl: thereby somehow renouncing the value of "pure knowing" moving as the essence of the objective world in the aroused consciousness, affirmed by Nishida. Whose thought is more faithfully supported by his disciple Koyama who contributed to the knowledge of his work in the West.

The sense of our considerations is as follows: the work of Nishida is important from the point of view of authentic knowing, of a new urgent knowing, because it bears an orientation that the latest philosophies are in danger of losing, if they have not already lost: an orientation without which dialecticism can prove everything, be true always, because is not thought penetrating the state of affairs, but state of affairs enslaving thought to itself. Hence every ideology is good as an ideal pretext for actually doing what one is led to by one's nature, not by spirit. And philosophy becomes the philosophical garb of certain positions apparently mental, but in effect psycho-physical.

What Nishida indicates should make a serious researcher pay attention. For what reason this living thinker, despite his clear knowledge of Western logic and the various evolutions of dialectics, still points to the "emptiness," or "nothingness" as the original reference point knowing? That "emptiness", that "nothingness", is not the abstraction of thought, but the experience of the intimate life of thought, in this informal and pre-dialectical, not graspable by rationality but determining rationality : which therefore can equally be the rationality that covers the true and luminous and penetrating motion of thought,

as the abstract rationality, divorced from living thought, and with the mechanism of speech pretending the motion of thought that is not there : the motion here being the motion of nature: psycho-physical, not ideal.

In Nishida's work one encounters a more creative position of thought, from the point of view of a revival of Zen, than that proper to the philosophical center of Sendai, initiated by two interesting thinkers, Eugen Herrigel – whose work on the "Zen in the Art of Archery" – and Karl Loewith is especially appreciated. For Nishida's art is the refined art of thought that does not evade its own presence and grasps itself in an intensive continuity that, sensed there where it is born, consciously leads to individual limits, to the level of a lucid freedom and vastness that is not the emptiness of being, but the limitless richness of all that is born and will continue to be born in the world. It is the experience of pure thought, which does not resort to "spiritual facts," myths, inner attitudes, mystical mediations, but draws directly from the spiritual source. This traditional ascetics pursue without possibility of the immediacy that thought, as pure thought, volitionally implements. But is pure thought, possibility of the thinker of this time who comes to experience rationality, so as to live it to the fullest, up to its arising moment: whereas the teachings of Zen revivifiers propose attitudes, views of life, ways of being, feelings, which already imply the movement of thought, without which they could not arise, but have the task of distracting thought from its essence, precisely because they presume to give it. But they not give it, they give only a part of it, because they pose themselves as "objects of the spirit," clothed in spirit, and implying that the ascetic does not know it. Otherwise the latter would turn to his activity that gives rise to them, rather than to them.

Thought is the last born of the spirit, through which nevertheless the spirit begins to enter directly into the world; but it can enter it only on condition that it does not take for the content of the world arises before it through its activity: the form of the world being already its penetration into it. Only the consciousness of this arising entry into the world can give spirit the way to avoid the mythicization of nature or supra-nature and to look at these as contents that it makes reveal, offering them form.

And it is the highest path of the researchers this time, which intellectual laziness prevents most from knowing: which Nishida, revivor of the inextinguishable tradition, has objectively intuited.

IV

Zen and Existentialism

Existentialism and phenomenology are the two currents of thought that still manifest a certain vitality in the West: insofar as they still somehow attempt to oppose that abstract rationality, discursive, mechanical, and lacking in intimate force, which has moreover become the fabric of today's culture.

There is a meeting between phenomenology and existentialism, which can give a glimpse of the positive element of the latter philosophizing: ultimate in a temporal sense, but also in a symbolic sense, that where even such an element ceases to be felt, it would be the end of philosophy: perhaps already in progress.

As Enzo Paci rightly observes "the problem of a positive existentialism seems to have to pass through Husserl and it is likely, after all, that a new philosophy can no longer be definable either existentialism orphenomenology" (1). But whoever looks at Husserl's phenomenology cannot fail to perceive how the search for the noema, the noesis, is actually the need for a restitution of the ideal living element to phenomena which, without this, remain impenetrable. By this route it is difficult to trace the "primordial phenomenon" of Goethe and to his possibility of contemplating living ideas (2). It is a golden thread, much thinned out, about to be lost: which can be revived and can give way to looking at this living ideal element as the same one that animated the thought of Vico, Gioberti, Rosmini (3) and other admirable thinkers who did not lose themselves in abstractness,

but philosophized by living the light and warmth of the ideas they referred to.

This noetic element, expressed now in idealist terms, now in terms of phenomenology, now in existentialist terms, could be discerned as a possibility of a new metaphysics: we say "possibility" and not, e.g., "germ," because it is only present, evoked, intuited, but still not really perceived and recognized for what it could be, not only as a speculative event.

Its experience, in fact, could only be a-dialectical, extra-rational, vital only incorporeally, interior and sufficient in itself, but at the same time ready to express itself in gesture, or in rhythm, or in aesthetic act, or in thought, or in word. Here is the possibility that Zen comes to meet such a positive moment in Western thought, for a meeting that is not an assonance, nor congenial confluence, but first and foremost identity of an inner principle perennially current in space and time.

Prerequisite of existentialism is the idea of existence, as something that should be experienced qua the mediation of judgment that always alters or veils contents. But the existent is, for Kierkegaard, not the brutal fact of existing, but the convergence of the finite and the infinite, in a combination that is essentially contradictory and whose contradiction cannot be conceptually liquidated, because such a liquidation would remove the possibility of grasping in man the concrete individual element that is at the same time the principle of his supersensible reality. This is more or less the intent of the main representatives

1. ENZO PACI, *La filosofia contemporanea*, Milan, Garzanti, 1957, p. 204.

existentialism, from Kierkegaard to Jaspers, Heidegger, Marcel, Barth. And already such an intent points to something analogous in Yoga, the Upanishadic conception, Vedanta and Mahayanic Buddhism: the possibility of drawing on the transcendent principle Brahman, or Atman, precisely through the element that seems to deny or conceal it in the guise of maya.

The emergence of an element die recalls sense of Zen asceticism is found particularly in the thought of Martin Heidegger who, ultimately, by tending to grasp in time what is outside time, ends up giving metaphysical justification to all that is fact, becoming, exteriority (4). Heidegger's position is such that it can lead a tragic substantivalism and a kind of deification of what is naturalness, or immediate spontaneity, when it is not the "naturalness" and of the "spontaneity" in which the pure principle of being is immediately expressed, as is clarified in Zen.

A deviation toward wearisome factualism or dull vitalism is implied in Heidegger's philosophy, not insofar as his thought contains it, but insofar as it was not thought through to its original motion, it lacks the inner orientation necessary for the vision of "temporality" in which the individual can still pursue "eternity". Such an orientation is instead present in Zen, for which immediacy and spontaneity, like the consummation of the intellectual element and all discursive conventionality, are not a passive surrender to mere becoming, but the consequence of an ascetic penetration of its ultimate meaning.

2. W. GOETHE, *Theory of Nature*, Turin, Boringhieri 1958, P- 54.
3. See G. GENTILE, La riforma della dialettica hegeliana, Florence, Sansoni, 1954, p. 114 ff.

We often speak of the necessity of an encounter between East and West: but in no "place" does such an encounter seem to us as possible as in an "inner", or ideal place: such an encounter cannot be erudite comparison or mere philosophy. Rather it turns out to be possible as an actual event, when we are capable of perceiving how a motion of Western thought, in this original and rich in life, at a given moment of its dialectic, risks drying up and altering itself through insufficient metaphysical momentum, and precisely at that point the possibility of manifesting again its initial vitality is indicated to it or offered to it by another inner experience, starting from another tradition and another historical sphere, but responding at that point to what that philosophizing would like and does not know how to want anymore, because of weariness or withering. It is possible exchange of contents whose perennity is their original unity: that which can make the East-West encounter true.

An element of life, in this sense, can come from Zen to the Western thinker, who still feels the responsibility of thought: certainly not to the frivolous devotee of an "existentialism" to be exhibited as an outward attitude and therefore not positively recognized for that pure ideal motion which in effect it is. The element of life is the possibility of an inner act that one is capable of grasp before it falls into rationality, from which springs the art of "proceeding without hesitation," mo chih ch'u, or that of wu-shih, naturalness without artifice (5). Thus the identity of essence and cohesion of G. Marcel, the moment of "persuasion" of C. Michelstaedter, and the possibility of transcendence in the

4. M. HEIDEGGER, *Being and Time*, Milan, Bocca, 1953.

becoming of the individual of K. Jaspers (6), can be recognized as ideas or ideals present as inner moments in the "abrupt" way proper to Zen (7). The existentialist dies philosophizing not in order to philosophize but to find life, he can find it again if he can intuit the meaning of it such as can be suggested to him by Zen: in becoming, in nature, in the bodily vicissitude, in the concrete relationship with being is present and visible transcendence, with its secret light and mystery. What the philosophers problematize, there is already resolved: but precisely now it lights up with true life.

When existentialism becomes an external attitude, rhetoric, is recitation, the false: that which was presumed to escape. Zen, on the other hand, resolves the issue of exteriority; for the ascetic it is the unrecognized garment of the infinite, which is before our eyes and at every moment can be recognized: in this sense it can lead instantaneously into the world of infinite bliss, which is certainly not that bound by human appearance. Existence, for the Zen ascetic, is not is contradiction, pertaining to any contradiction only to the "mental" nonconscious of the "essence," which enables it to be the mental that it is. the Western thinker must

5. A. WATTS, *The Way of Zen*, Milan, Feltrinelli, 1960, p. 160.
6. Cf. G. MARCEL, *Journal métaphysique*, Paris, 1927; C. CHESTERFIELD, *La persuasione is la retorica*, Florence, Vallecchi, 1922; K. JASPERS, *La mia filosofia*, Turin, Einaudi, 1946.
7. D. T. SUZUKI, *Essays in Zen Buddhism*, London, Rider, Second Series, 1950, c. IX; HUBERT BENOIT, "Doctrines progressives et décrite abrupte," in *Yoga, Science de l'Homme integral*, Paris, Les Cahiers du Sud, 1953, p. 284.

still be able to trust in "pure thought" if he is to perceive the metaphysical element that comes to him living from Zen, which is difficult to grasp by the same devotees of this asceticism, now widespread in doctrinal and exegetical terms, but therefore less and less penetrable. A doctrine of the non-mental, Zen therefore demands an exceptional activity of the mental. For thought to rest in essence, and for essence to take the place of thought, it is necessary for thought to be truly possessed. Since Zen is a transcendent "way," it cannot be defined or analyzed: one can speak of a "nature of Zen" and a "style," from whose forms one can trace the idea of which they are clothed(8). Behind spontaneity, naturalness, acquiescence to the external world, behind style and art, behind non-thinking and absolute surrender to becoming, there is an idea that all takes up: an undialectic or pre-dialectic idea, but an idea nonetheless.

Therefore any relationship between the modern existentialist or ontological thinker with Zen could only be given by way of meditative penetration. Those who penetrate Mahayanic

8. Difficult, in this respect, if not impossible, to expound Zen: that, when everything is expounded with exact reference to the texts and traced back to some conceptual arrangement, precisely in relation to the a- dialectical spirit of Zen, one is veils it with a further diaphragm. Hence, only a connoisseur of the texts who is also an authentic thinker, but therefore simultaneously a poet in the original sense, could speak of Zen, In this sense, of all modern expositors, the most qualified, for a quality "Zen" already present in the structure of thought, turns out to be G. Tucci, albeit from short essays (Cf., among Paltto, "Zen and the Character of the Japanese People," in *Asiatica*, No. 1, 1939; "Zen" in *Sapere*, Voi. XII, The Series, p. 333; "Japanese Poetry" in *Forms of the Asian Spirit*, Messina, Principato, 1940, p. 260; and other studies): promise of an organic work that, at this point, spreading an interest in the subject both in Europe and America and given the various inevitable confusions and alterations, became necessary.

thought, and in particular the Hua Yen philosophy (Avatamsaka Sutra), thus arriving at the metaphysical justification of Zen, may note how, in China, Cb'an is also known as hsin tsung, or "Doctrine of the Mental." As Chang Chen-chi states, the Mental is the substance and key to Zen studies (9). Of the three aspects of the mental, manifest, enlightenment, unmanifest, the latter, the highest, in effect contains the possibility of the other two, being the essential principle, or emptiness (sunyata}. From the "unmanifest" to the "manifest" the continuous expression essence, which is clothed in the life that appears as a series of semblances. Therefore the modes of a Zen ascetic's life tend to be the robe of essence: in essence they express Zen precisely insofar as its manifestation does not pass through the intellect, but e1directly interio- re external action: daily experience, art, work, human relations, and therefore Yesisteriza, become avenues of that flow of Zen, identical to the flow of sustains nature.

The inner practice that begins with the contemplation of one's mind in tranquility presupposes the possession of the mind: it is the practice of the Tsao Tung school, called "serene reflection," mo chao (10). This reflecting, or meditating, is an art that Western thinkers have lost: the alarm existentialism and ontologism is precisely a warning of the layering virtue alluded to in the Prajnaparamita. Such virtu in turn is the foundation of kóan, meditative relation to an object, sensible or suprasensible: possibility of taking at a given moment any event, thing, thought,

9. CHANG CHEN-CHI, *The Practice of Zen*, New York, Harper and Brothers, 1959, p. 25.
10. CHANG CHEN-CHI, *Op. cit.*, p. 45.

as the subject of contemplation, so as to bring its problematicity back to its essence, whereby life itself can be looked upon as a great kóan. Of course, it is necessary that the contemplative relationship be given, in order for the exercise of kóan to be possible in the form required by the discipline: which establishes the gradualization of a distinct series of kóan, responding to the inner development of the disciple.

We believe it is recognizable to this plinth the living element that can be offered by Zen to the existentialist tendency when it turns to life. Authentic knowledge of Zen is certainly indispensable: which, as is mentioned, cannot be a matter of mere intellectual learning, precisely because of the principle that is underlies such asceticism. On the other hand, studies intended to present the practical and formative aspect of Zen, as an inner energetic element useful to today's agnostic Western soul, are not always free of a subtle emphasis that betrays the concealed utilitarian tendency of the expositors and their correlation with an audience affected by a similar tendency. By an indistinguishable inner nuance, the most accurate treatises on Zen are no longer Zen: and it is as if they spoke of something else.

However, the modern Western thinker today precisely in his peculiar gnoseological attitude has a chance to tap into the spiritual again, insofar as he grasps the original moment of knowing. As in a certain period of the evolution of European thought, Novalis had to recognize with his magical idealism (11), one is now *elat* at a point where thought cannot count except as a living germ of action: otherwise it becomes a fake. Perhaps, even before a Kierkegaard and a Nietzsche, positive existentialism

should be traced back to that mysterious and luminous figure of ascetic and poet who was Novalis.

Difficult assumption that of the thought that is to be made life: the problem of problems. Existentialism not recognized for what it is, i.e., as an ideal requirement, and projected into outward attitudes, is always became grotesque and absolutely foreign to the initial assumption. Moreover, any prescription acting cannot be but "rule" and the rule is what continuously the individual, out of inner laziness, likes to substitute for the moment of freedom : he ordinarily does not have the strength to awaken in himself a pure relation to existing, such that each time he intuits the essential and necessary act to a given situation. A philosophy of action in Taoist sense, for modern man, can only be a "Philosophy of Freedom" (12). This ultimately aims to account for the transition from essence to existence that is -according to the spirit of Zen-independent of any theoretical prescription: whether this is understood as excluding existence, whether it is understood as including existence, since the thought that however fixed the rule, cannot remain closed within it as in an indefinite system, beyond which nothing is truly knowable.

Requirement sensed admirably by the great ascetic-thinkers of Mahayana and particularly by the Zen Masters (by the authentic ones). In fact, having resolved the opposition of being and existing, of thinking and acting, having traced all determination back to the original inner act, the question of the

11. Cf. Augusto Hermet's Introduction to *Ima to the Night and Spiritual Songs of NOVALIS*, Lanciano, Catabba, 1912.

12. R. STEINER, *Die Philosophie der Freiheit*, Basel, Geering, 1951.

transition from thinking to acting, or from idea to life, is resolved in the most concrete way, in that it is eliminated. It is a question of understanding how by the motion of the intellect one does not pass action: is this to acting nor to "non-acting." From ordinary thought one does not pass to action because such thought in its abstractness is a closed circle from which there is no way out: whereas from living thought, or essential thought, there is no way out, because outside of it there is nothing into which one must enter (13). In fact, the empirical individual in his particularity does nothing, precisely because he labors act, to do: true action does not presuppose normative thought or philosophy, because true action consists precisely in living thought, or "thinking free of the senses," which is certainly not the achievement of a mysticism or a doctrine, but a purely noetic event that, as such, is already the principle of acting. Nor, outside it, is possible any acting, or any doing.

And to conclude: a Westerner who wanted to enter into the spirit of Zen-and not simply into the literature that more or less reflects it- would not ever truly except by converting into this those processes of rational thought, which would otherwise reduce those doctrines to its abstractness, allowing, at best, a vague feeling of their transcendent content (14). He would first have to come to grasp the pure inner forces that present themselves reflexively and dialectically in his present ordinary thought: that already would be a bringing himself to the threshold of metaphysical experience, which precisely is way to Zen. But such a possibility is certainly denied to those who are

13. Cf. G. GENTILE, *System of Logic as a Theory of Knowing*, vol. II, Florence, Sansoni, 1942, p. 161.

unable to see in all modern science – from physics to psychology – a quest which, in its extroverted direction, is valid only for a world assumed only as exteriority and measurability; modern scientific thought, in fact, can grasp the inorganic world, but not the organic and the living, just as present-day psychology, availing itself of a similar kind of thinking, can from the outside record and classify constant manifestations of the psyche but not reach the psyche.

The error is precisely in the realistic-ingenuous attitude proper to present-day science, which dreams, with ever more refined measurements, of coming to perceive the etheric or the psychic, as if the spiritual were a thing, very subtle, but a thing, motionless and waiting to be grasped. By whom, finally? Vision that does not cease to be empiricist and dogmatic even when it fabulates of supersensible experiences: inquiry whose defect is to not be scientific enough to warn how, having experienced the physical world, a true science should continue not with poking around in the physical again, but with experience the cognitive forces that enabled the experience itself: that the spiritual is not something to be found again "after" things, or after atoms, but precisely the inner a-dialectical act which enables dialectics and which, only by alienating itself in external processes, can become knowledge of the physical world. Hence to proceed toward the supersensible can only be the intellectual motion inverse to that which binds itself to the sensible contents; while to many it seems that, by dissecting and refining more and more these contents, one can

14. For the positive aspect of such a possibility in normal inner experience, cf.
M. HEIDEGGER, Of the Essence of Foundation, Milan, Bocca, 1952,
II, "Transcendence as Horizon, etc."

finally find the spirit. To a "right" thinker it escape fact that having substituted for the old notion of "matter" that of "energy", does not remove the materialistic limit at all. It changed its name to a disanimated relationship with reality ; which remains unchanged: limit unnoticed by thought to itself, which Zen could resolve, but which simultaneously prevents one from approaching true Zen.

V

Zen and Psychoanalysis

After the studies of Jung and Baudouin in Switzerland, of Laforgue in France, and the research of the English and American schools, psychoanalysis not only entered with authority of functional methodology into pedagogy, sociology, and the technique of vocational choices, but began to orient scholars of myths, symbols, and ancient traditions, and therefore the science of religions itself. It was inevitable that Jung's vast framework of analytical psychology would also include Taoism and consequently Zen. A precise expression of the encounter between Zen metaphysics and psychoanalysis occurred in the volume *Zen Buddhism and Psychoanalysis*, New York 1963, which brings together the views of D. T. Suzuki, Erich Fromm and Richard De Martino, respectively, on the subject, expounded at an official Conference held in 1957 in Cuernavaca, Mexico. But the collusions, understandings and concordances between scholars of Zen and scholars of psychoanalysis, as well as the acquisitions of psychoanalysts themselves scholars of Far Eastern metaphysics, continue, essentially fueled by the well-known Jungian conception about the analogy of myths and symbols of traditions with the symbolic material of the dream or fantasy of the neurotic.

The meeting, therefore, more than from an objective understanding of Zen doctrines from psychoanalysis, resulted from a reduction of them to the psychoanalytic scheme. What is strange is that such a procedure was lent to an expositor like

Suzuki, who naively must have believed that psychoanalysis represents the metaphysical viewpoint of the West, as well as the psychological one. After all, Jung himself explicitly stated that if the Eastern masters truly expressed a metaphysics, no is hope of understanding them from the psychoanalytic point of view. In this regard Jung emphasizes what Martin Buber says about him: he (Jung) "uses myth as a function, to suck things into the world of the absolute." But the trouble is that this absolute is the "unconscious".

The unconscious becomes the key to the explanation of every myth, every mysticism and every metaphysics, not because such a key comes to grasp its essence, as a superior and supersensible content, but insofar as it eliminates this content, denying an autonomous ego-consciousness, in which the spirit manifests itself. "From the psychological aspect, the phenomenon of the spirit (sic!), like any autonomous complex (sic!), appears to be an intention of the unconscious, superior or at least collateral to the ego-consciousness," writes Jung, in his essay "Spirit and Life" (1926), and more further: "...The spirit is not merely a formulated idea or maxim, but unfolds, in its strongest and most direct manifestations, a characteristic independent life, which is felt to be that of a being independent of us." An independent complex, a foreign and inscrutable entity, the spirit is seen by Jung neither more nor less as a transcendent nature, to express which man resorts to the symbol. The spirit is thus outside man, not such that it is actualized in him as an operating presence or foundation: the spirit without really being it. "A spirit that allows itself to be translated into a concept, is a psychic complex included within the limits of the consciousness of our self" (*ibid.*).

It is difficult to determine whether Jung's dialectical maneuvering to ego-consciousness and bring the spirit back into the ambit of the unconscious, therein leading it back to that inescapable necessity to which Freud first conferred universal value, is conscious or itself an expression of the naive psychological realism that characterizes his investigation, despite the capacity for conceptual connection and the abundance of images. Capacitation and abundance that throughout his work play according to a state mind, rather than according to clairaudient thought. To anyone with a logical mind this cannot escape, but this cannot be the decisive criticism of a system committed to the understanding of an irrational universal. Decisive is the fact that the dialectic of the unconscious in its univocity is indeed not an idea capable of movement, but the opposite. If it were an idea, it could not but convert itself into a knowledge capable of sensing in itself the forces the foundation and not into an area beyond consciousness. Such a dialectic is not is thought, but feeling clothed in thought, so that thought does not know its own autonomy and thereby ego, or spirit, does not actualize its own being grounded in this. But perhaps this is the ultimate goal of the vast Jungian analysis, directed at sciences, all disciplines, all traditions and religions: to prevent the thought that evokes them from flowing into them as an inner motion, to prevent them from recognizing their structure as a spiritual force in action, to prevent the presence of the supersensible in life from being felt, as the throb of life itself, to prevent the spirit from being found as the basal virtue of self-consciousness. This is why psychoanalysis has also turned to Zen Buddhism: because neither does it escape the inexorable phenomenology of the in-conscious.

Jung's analytical psychology approaches the world of myths and traditions and attempts to reconstruct man's spiritual history

through the primitive symbolism of paintings executed by neurotics. "...These paintings originate mainly in that field of psychic life which I have called the Collective Delineation, a term by which I mean an unconscious psychic activity, present in all human beings, which today not only gives rise to symbolic paintings, but was the source of all similar productions in the past" ("Purposes of Psychotherapy," 1929).

In the direction of such a connection with the past, much ground has been made since a versatile French writer, Maryse Choisy, after publishing an essay entitled *La Métaphysique des Yogas* (1948) returned to the subject by examining it from the psychoanalytic point of view and wrote precisely *Yogas et Psychanalyse* (1949), defining this new investigation of hers as an "essay on the Indian techniques of sublimation." thus took it for granted that Yoga was a psycho-somatic practice that realized ante litteram the relationship intuited by psychoanalysis between the ego and the unconscious, arriving, without any comparative analysis, without any logical or metaphysical justification, to admit that Atman-Brahman of the Hindu tradition and Jung's "unconscious" are the same thing.

Introduced this arbitrary identification with regard to an essentially noetic sphere, the investigation of which psychoanalysis forbids itself by wanting to reduce its every signification, every mythical and symbolic expression to a field experience that results to it solely from hystero-neurotic phenomenology; established with stupefaction facilitates the Unconscious-Absolute identity, all developments of an orientalism of an unexpected kind, because totally adapted to psychic phenomenism, are possible. The Tao and Nirvana are part of the universal Unconscious, not because they are

recognized supraconscious, but because the storehouse of "complexes," of unrevealed impulses and corresponding symbolic images, expands from the bottom upward to encompass everything that human consciousness experiences at the limit of rationality. The most severe criticism of Freud is precisely that of Jung, who blames him for having given such demeaning content to the unconscious, as to close the horizons of the spirit to the human psyche. Jung precisely reopens them, but without changing meter, on the contrary extending it to forbidden areas, not overcoming the monoideism of the unconscious, but reinforcing it, unlimitedly expanding its domain, up to the Absolute of traditional metaphysics. Therefore in this domain, Zen could not but be included at a later stage.

Among those who have developed such a view with mystical zeal, one French scholar in particular stands out, Hubert Benoit, whose surge of conviction with which he interprets Zen from a psychoanalytic perspective is striking. His faith and good will are evident, his grasp of Jungian dialectics is sure and precise, his love for Zen is sincere: unfortunately, however, this series of positive elements only serves to make even more plausible to the Western reader a position which, if it truly reduces the possibility of supersensible experience to the spiritual extension of a subsensible domain, is extremely dangerous, for it definitively takes away man's possibility of finding a glimmer of light beyond the thick curtain of the technical-mechanical and dialectical-abstract world, deprives him of hope to experience the autonomous force of consciousness as the orienting principle of its actual experience of the physical world. If the East could still offer a reference in this sense, this is cut off by an interpretation that, already in the ambition of the culture in which it was born, demonstrates its

opposition to the spirit: hence it cannot enter the world Traditions.

Instead, it seems to be open to the spirit. From the worldwide acceptance of his doctrine, it seems that Jung's unconscious has dimensions of height and at the same time of depth. In reality its height turns out to be simply supposed, without consciousness of supposing it: without that awareness which of the hypothesis the investigator of the physical or mathematical world normally has, when poses a thesis. And it is scientific duty to find it out.

The Unconscious is a world without shores, which does not stand to contradict any description of it: it is something that through Freud and more especially through Jung, eagerly seeking chrisms beyond the field of psychopathology, tends to become a psychological metaphysics, since in the present time there seems to be no longer possibility of a true metaphysics. Having devised the equation Unconscious-Absolute, or Unconscious-Tao, or Unconscious-Zen, or Unconscious-Brahman, the dream of Jung's analytical psychology is crowned, aimed at constituting officially recognizable transcendent value to the Unconscious he so diligently studied in neurotics, their dreams and their pictorial productions. Having established the equation, not only the metaphysics is constituted, but also the dogmatics, which is for example today the dogmatics of all psychological tests without which one is no longer able to make a decision in the field of pedagogy, or vocation technique or vocational guidance. The metaphysics, kicked out the door, is returned through the window, but under what disturbing conditions!

Zen (actually its simulacrum) has well served the cause of psychoanalytic dogmatics: perhaps Suzuki himself is not is able to surmise what consequences have been pregnant with the fact that

he has admitted, for example, the character of the "unconscious" of Prajna. Behind words always hide demons, he is admonished by the ancient wisdom: which means this: do not adopt names without experiencing the reality to which they correspond, otherwise within the empty shell of those names come to dwell the demons of falsehood. Thus Suzuki, in his volume II non-mental according to Zen thought, falls into the temptation of using the term "unconscious" according to the psychoanalytic meaning. In Chapter VII, entitled "The Awakening of Prajna the Unconscious," he goes so far as to state that "the mental unconscious presents its pathological states on the plane of the senses (stasruta) and of thought (matajnata), a plane that corresponds to the Unconscious of analytical psychology. The Unconscious is the meeting place of Gods and Demons. Unless one is guided correctly by Prajna and understands the meaning and functioning of the Unconscious, one risks falling into the clutches of the monster. The psychoanalytic Unconscious cannot go far enough to include the notion of the state-without-mental state." Where it would seem to surface is the intuition of a limitation of the psychoanalytic unconscious as well as the idea of wise discrimination. But such discrimination is not given even in terminology.

Suzuki's naivete is patent: in his grant that a part of the unconscious mind corresponds to the unconscious of psychoanalysis, he does not realize that he has given way to that unconscious to include everything else, including Prajna as unconscious. In Jung's cosmos, as soon as leaves consciousness, the Unconscious comes into operation, which, however, according to him, even earlier contained the deluded consciousness of being from this. Hence there is not, as Suzuki also labors to show by diagrams, psychological state and supra-

psychological state, but only psychological level beyond and within which the Unconscious operates. Suzuki believes that he has distinguished the psychoanalytic unconscious from the supra-psychological unconscious mind, but not only the use of the term "unconscious," but also the difficulty in understanding the relationship that the mental of modern man may have with what as supra-mental is presented by the Zen Masters as extra-conscious, i.e., unrelated to egoic consciousness, lead this expositor to lend the doctrines he interprets to the play of Jungian mono-idealism. The non-mental, or rather the supra-mental, thus goes to be confused with the sub-mental, which is actually the Unconscious of psychoanalysis.

But to the unconscious, as an unidentified non-mental, the conscious being can open up. In the above-mentioned book (Ch. II), Suzuki says: "When Hjung-jen advises the yogi to guard the mental, that may mean that he advises him to prevent his individual mental from making an obstacle to the original Mental." But no one except the individual mental itself can decide that This egoic, individual, incurably self-conscious mental (fortunately!), is the one against which the accusations, criticisms, and attacks of psychoanalysts as well as of spiritualists are levied; but, strangely enough, it is precisely he who can finally determine to change course: no one outside of him can decide to set aside himself. By whom else would he be set aside, or silenced, reduced to a state of silence?

This point, which is the theme of self, throughout the corpus of Jung remains invariably obscure and everywhere entangled with strange contradictions, so that one can never understand what is the starting point for the ego to make the unconscious its own, having to open itself up to it, yet without getting in the way

of itself, rather self-eliminating, to finally individuate itself. Jung's effort to reconcile the notion of the ego as an epiphenomenon of the unconscious – which is the righteous assumption of the fundamental doctrine of the unconscious – with the ascetic-metaphysical requirement that he cannot fail to accommodate, in his attempt to give the unconscious a spiritual dimension. The Devil has become a friar: but whoever observes him closely, sees his horns sprouting from under his hood. Certainly, the Devil needs fervent and awake minds, endowed with honest and even mystical momentum, to enter the culture of this time. He needs logic and a systematic spirit, provided that it is not the ego that makes use of it, but he-, we said it, Es, the Unconscious.

Hubert Benoit precisely attempts to reconcile the two worlds, Zen and Analytical Psychology, Tao and Unconscious, and therefore in his three most relevant works on this theme, Lacher prise, Métaphysique et Psychanalyse, La Doctrine Suprême selon la pensée Zen, he insists above all on the art opening the ordinary mental to the metaphysical Non-Mental. As we said, his good will and faith are evident, but not such as to make him independent of psychoanalytic dogmatics: which for him functions as a method of clarifying the most noble Far Eastern doctrine to the Western researcher, to the modern man to whom the problem of consciousness looms. Like every psychoanalyst, he does not move, but is moved by this formidable analytic that presumes to function as a logic of the ego, without possessing logic, though he goes so far as to show that he possesses it, since the philosophies of the ego, of the Germanic-Italic tradition, have failed their task in the West, and since there is now no logician capable of holding the psychoanalyst accountable for his errors of pen-serum. Everything is explained or logicized by the elusive logic of the

Unconscious that lies outside conscious reason, like an extra-human logic. Of which the psychoanalyst is but a mediator.

One of the central propositions of Hubert Benoit's volume *La Doctrine Supreme* (La Colombe, Paris 1960), sounds like this: "My organs appeared and developed spontaneously. Could not my immediate intuitive, non-dualistic knowledge also appear spontaneously? Zen answers this question in the affirmative." It is necessary to immediately disillusion Benoit, despite his moving confidence, by pointing out to him that the age of spontaneity is over. How can he not notice, or rather, not know? The greatest thinkers agree on this, the mystics, the inquirers, the pessimists and the optimists, the traditionalists and the innovators: they all know that an epoch of spontaneity, which has closed, is being followed by an epoch of self-awareness and volition. From Hegel to Gentile, from Bachofen to Aurobindo, from Nietzsche to Nishida, the greatest intuitives agree on the volitional and rationalistic character of our epoch. Until the appearance of logical thought man "led," and spontaneity characterized his development: unfortunately, since that time the gods have left in the hands of men the reins that until then they had held for him. And the era of responsibility has begun for man: in a somewhat questionable, unhappy, and unaesthetic way, but it has in truth begun: where is spontaneity to be found anymore? Perhaps not even in the Far East anymore. And, in saying this, let us keep in mind the genre spontaneity to which Benoit alludes. Who thus continues: "For Zen, the normal spontaneous evolution man leads to satori. Principle works ceaselessly in me in the sense of the unfolding of satori (as this same Principle works in the bulb of the tulip toward the opening of its flower)." But if we get the suspicion that this "Principle" is the Unconscious of Jung, we cannot help but recall the solution he gives to open to the

Unconscious: to be in a state of silence and relaxation and mystically wait for "it" to manifest. According to Jungian "technique," there is nothing to be done but to let the power of spontaneity of the Unconscious act: or of the Principle, as Benoit shrewdly says, Discourse that if it were given to us by Shri Aurobindo concerning the divine Shakti, or by De Molinos concerning Divine Grace, or by Meister Eckhart concerning the "vividness of empty being," would persuade us, because it would have behind it a rigorous asceticism and a precise mystical methodology, it would not connect with a world from which rise obscure impulses, "complexes" and eroticisms, ancestral inclinations, whose symbology is derived from the fantasies and dreams of neurotics.

But, in spite of the age of will and rationality, return can find in itself the motion of spontaneity, not insofar as it deprives itself of rationality, but insofar as it possesses it to the point of being independent of it and perceiving its radical undialectic force. An arduous and rare task: arduous especially for those who make use of thought without knowing it and construct their doctrine by means of thought, without recognizing to it the value they derive from it; whereby one thinks, for example, an "unconscious" that stands outside of thought, and does not perceive that this "outside" is also thought. Hence one does not come out of thought, because one not possess its intimate motion: one does not tap into spontaneity. One does not let go of the grasp, the grasp remaining in thought, which is not is capable of discerning its own vehicles: which is not the affect of the unconscious, but of pure logic: which must be possessed, if it is to be overcome.

However, it must be acknowledged that Benoit (p. 194) warns, "An intense and patient work of our thought is necessary,

so that we collaborate with our liberating Principle." But it is clear that it will not be able to be a thought capable of drawing its own foundation, or its own source, if it always finds before itself presupposed, if not opposed, this "principle," which inevitably conditions it, does not let it be *ex se*, nor therefore manifest its transcendent spontaneity. Thus the exercise of thought is required, but on the condition that it functions not according to itself, but by cooperation with the "Principle," that is, according to something foreign and superior to thought itself and therefore of the one who thinks. Not differently the materialist thinks of matter as an otherness opposed to thought: otherness to whose "objectivity" his self must conform, so that the physical phenomenon ends up dominating the researcher: which is the drama of the West, the drama of the dullness of thought, or the fall of thought.

Basically, with rare exceptions, Western thought that has fallen into physical phenomenalism and dogmatizing sensory experience is what is went to eastern doctrines. Jung's analytical psychology is this thought that has fallen into psychological, indeed psychopathological phenomenon, and presumed to rise to the understanding of the traditional world, not through its own internal conversion or resolution but through the formal extension of its own mythicity, insofar as it draws on metaphysics merely imagined, including them all in the universality of an Unconscious, with respect to which thought has no possibility of liberation or autonomy, but of exhaustion of its own dialecticism: so that the true subject of the movement does not arise: which is the Ego, not the Uconscious.

Remarkable is the effort with which, however, Hubert Benoit attempts to reconcile Zen, Analytical Psychology and Thinking,

and to provide the diligent experiencer with the best way to immerse himself in the Unconscious, and thus come to "free himself." Of what, if he cannot tap into the point where is thinking itself that thinks all this, that does not let go, precisely because it thinks of letting go? However, he adds, "Each of us lives in the state of satori and would not know how to live otherwise. When Zen speaks of satori in time, when it says for example, 'satori suddenly comes upon us when we have exhausted all the resources of our being,' it is not speaking of the state of satori intemporally but of the instant when we realize that we are in this state, or more exactly of the instant when we cease to believe that we live outside this state. The distinction between satori-state and satori-event is very important" (p. 297). This image, or this technique, is at the heart of the thesis with which Hubert Benoit tends to establish the identity between Unconscious and Absolute, that is, the cooperation between Zen and Psychoanalysis. Of course, this is a very refined analytical psychology, with finesse that even Jung did not possess, as well as, on the other hand, a fairly tame Zen. But the underlying content is inevitably realistic-ingenuous.

We cannot help but be reminded, by analogy, of the mysticism of the followers of Christian Science, who speak of a Divine that already exists, and already realized on earth, so that man's task is simply to know it, so that, for example, one is cured of sickness as long as one is persuaded that it as such cannot exist, is a deception, nothing being able to escape the Divine which is the reality man and the world. Of course, the idea of the satori-state becoming satori-event springs from a more organic vision: not only does it have strong intellectual foundations in Mahayanic Buddhism, but it is supported by the possibility of meditation as taught by the Zen Masters. However, it is no less

naïve. The divine reality of the world of Christian Science is a view that appeals to the magical power of a faculty modern man has entirely lost, faith, in the evangelical sense; it is therefore essentially a petition of principle. Our criticism is not directed at the vision of a supernatural basis for the world, but at the inability to distinguish the ideal of such a vision from its simplistic realization. The era of simplicity and spontaneity indeed is finite, and the regaining of them is the work of the "conscious soul": it cannot be the achievement of an opening to the Unconscious, but of a high strengthening of the intellect and of the most refined logical spirit, to which devotion and a strict sense of morality cooperate.

Hubert Benoit is a provided and organic writer who seeks to enforce the demands of the Unconscious without sacrificing those of self-consciousness. At the center of his exposition of Zen is the ingenious insight into the relationship between satori-state and satori- event, which has a fair amount of convincing power, because of the element of truth that lives in it as a force of image, whereby the image, learned and relived, can give the sensation of an inner movement, which is not its intellectual content, but the very dynamic of imagination.

In other words, the image or idea of a spiritual task, already contains in itself something of the virtue of that task: it contains it as its own fabric: thought or image. The researcher who possesses consciousness of the thinking process, cannot fail to feel importance of experiencing the phenomenology of such a dynamic of the image, as pure form: this gives him by its movement an animating force that he should have the finesse not to attribute to the content to which it gives form, that is, to the spiritual task described, which could, to that extent, be any other.

Form of imagining, which the insufficiently conscious experiencer mistakes for content: whereas the true content is the form, that is, the very substance of the image with which he begins to create. Hence true asceticism is the art of volitionally arousing an imagining that frees itself from bodily, but psychic influences, and can reach such a degree of objectification, that it manifests its spiritual nature in the soul: but then it reveals itself as an activity of the Ego. The ego enacts itself through an activity that is its own: it begins to have itself independently of everything that, as arbitrary imaginative life linked to the subconscious, dulls and alters the life of the soul, taking away the possibility of acting through it. It must not naively deify and strengthen that which tends to take away that possibility: the subconscious.

Only Spiritual Science can open the way today to an experience of depth of soul, but of a supersensible world of forces, which is expressed immediately in ordinary consciousness. It is not Jung's unconscious, but consciousness realized according to its original being, expressing itself in conscious immediacy: clear consciousness its becoming, not its dampening itself to be invaded by what it is not. It is not Jung's Unconscious, with the series of images that he constructs without possessing consciousness of the image and therefore not even supposing the ascesis of the image – which has mathematical laws and in its method essentially logical structure-but the very world of the ego that alone can be the investigator of the psyche and the therapist. The ego has nothing to do with the nebulous sphere of the Unconscious: an area that only depends on it, it being the entity that continually is called question as the subject of every external or internal action. In this sense it is the present reality of consciousness, the responsible one: it cannot therefore always be him who constructs a psycho-phantom world opposed to him,

and opposed to him with the forces of him. A sound psychology should give the ego a way to experience itself, not by giving form and name but demonicity to the motions in which the force alienates itself, but by activating its force in conscious expressions. One of these expressions is the vivid imagining, that is, imagining that the ego can arouse in its limpid and limitless mobilities by means of conscious volitional motion: which is the art of meditation.

The image of the satori "state" and "event", given to us by Benoit, is such, in its syntheticity, that, as pure imagining, la from its sense, it arouses inner life: on such a line it would be necessary to continue, that is, on the synthetic power of imagining itself. But Benoit shows that he does not know this, because he is caught up in confidence in the realism or contentism of the image: he is drawn by a practical interest, which has nothing to do with the dynamics of the image. Which is lives as such, while it becomes abstract all the subsequent discourse, which would like to make the bridge between image-theory and its realization. The interest in realizing the image paralyzes its light, which barely surfaces.

It may seem, from everything we are going to say, that we deny the reality of the Unconscious. In truth, we must recognize, there exists an "unconscious" which is the little consciousness of self, little consciousness of the ego. In order for such little consciousness to acquire the right to life, an Unconscious was conceived whose task is to hinder the man of this time from developing the consciousness, which is urgent and necessary for him. It is unclear whether Hubert Benoit loves Jung's Unconscious or Zen more: certainly, starting psychoanalytic training, he takes away the possibility of deriving from Zen a

more intense self-consciousness than is possible because of the doctrine of the Unconscious. Therefore he cannot perform the inner act required of a modern disciple: he does not become aware of the motion of thought which, insofar as he is a Western thinker, enables him to grasp in concepts and images what of Zen, under such conditions, is still graspable, assuming it can be. It eludes him what gives him a way understanding some of the themes of Zen, and, eluding him, it eludes Zen itself: that by the Westerner it cannot be understood except by means of the intellect capable of grasping itself as pure activity and therefore insofar as it is first and foremost free of unconscious or internal dogmatism, that is, of unconscious gratuitousness.

Sophistry is always unconscious. The sophism of the Zen-analyst consists in believing that from the right thought of the thing one can go to the thing. In reality (as we have shown in some of our studies) from abstract thought one cannot move to action, because, since it is a disanimated thought, no movement toward anything can arise from it: whereas, if the thought is alive, the task is not to move from it to something else (which would be to fall back into dualism), in that it includes in itself the object and the action, there being for it no otherness: the highness that is instead consecrated, strengthened and universalized by the doctrine of the Unconscious: the most inescapable dualism that fallen human imagination has ever conceived. The true anti-Zen, if one can thus say, the most obscure dualism, because unaware that it is.

Duality, dissension, neurosis are inevitable, in fact, because they split the unity of consciousness: according to psychoanalysis, there is no conscious act that does not have to account for itself to a world that limits consciousness and tends to split it into two.

And being two, it is not possible for Moon not to exclude the other: in fact, it is the duality that is never known to occur in conscious man, since consciousness can be such as long as nothing excludes it, as long as it is not efflorescence of something else from this to which, nevertheless, it must give conscious assent for it to have value: as, for example; to the "complex," whose alleged autonomy is the recognition granted to it by the autonomous consciousness. Serious contradiction that offends the reality and dignity of human thought. Indeed, consciousness is such insofar as it includes in itself all conscious facts, including that of representing or conceiving an Unconscious of which it nevertheless considers itself a part or counterpart. In truth there is not even the dual form of satori-state and satori-event: there is a single satori that as a metaphysical event takes place la where consciousness ceases to be foreign and opposed to itself. In truth Zen I has nothing to do with psychoanalysis.

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But it is necessary to take a closer look at the reasons why such collusion nevertheless is, on some level, possible. If one looks closely, in the present time, the psychoanalysis of Freud and the analytic psychology of Jung have imposed themselves on the world, rather than as doctrines of the psyche, with the authority of a metaphysics. Not because they bear in themselves an overcoming of the psychological limit—which indeed remains invincible – but because they have elevated their content to planes that by the very dialectic of their inquiry are foreign to them and that once belonged to the spiritual domain. However, as is mentioned, psychoanalysis was able to encroach on a terrain that was not its own, because at the custody of it was no longer

thought, there was no longer philosophy, there was no longer the living religious element.

But has it really invaded it, this ground? Can a psychological dialectic be movement of thought, or positive action of the psyche? For indeed Freudian and Jungian analysis is reduced to a dialectical relationship with the neurotic subject or with a preconstructed image of the world, in there is no room for the self-conscious man. The action of the psychoanalyst or the analyst on the psychoanalyzed is not an action of the soul on the soul through knowledge and mastery of the soul's forces, but rather the action of a dialectic schematized according to variety of states of mind dialectically assumed in the patient, but imperceptible, according to "complexes" driven to manifest themselves also by dialectical means: an analytic logic stimulating another kind of logic, of the associative-automatic type, for further dialectical analysis. Exchange of mere discourses, under which flows unknown the world of the soul, which the Jun-Freudian analysis presumes to grasp, but does not grasp. But it behaves as if it grasps it: as if it actually, or directly, operates on the subject.

For other is the life of the soul with the dynamic relationship between its center and its various forces, other is the dialectical schematization of such life, based on a logical-discursive interpretation. That the content of discourse is the psyche does not mean that discourse operates on the psyche: instead, psychoanalysis behaves as if discourse operates, essentially relying on discourse and yet operating as if it were a penetrating force in the structures of consciousness, as from all discourse.

Lacking for itself this gnoseological activity to understand its own limitation, lacking psychological analysis regarding its own

process of inquiry and its own instrument of knowledge, it uses that instrument without knowing anything about it. Hence his. formidable confidence and his ability to influence vast ranks of men, including those in culture and philosophy: men for whom it is too arduous a commitment to think autonomously and who in every field aspire to find everything already thought out for them. In the field of logic, for example, symbolic logic, in the field of the psyche, psychoanalysis. Thus this analysis of the psyche has penetrated everywhere, due to the fact that there is no modern problem that does not involve the psychological datum. From pedagogy to the science of religions, from sociology to technology, Freudian psychoanalysis and Jungian analytics, split up or cleverly brought together, have been able to penetrate everything, interpreting and, to the point of becoming not only a tool in-depth investigation, but also a way of conceiving life.

In an age when philosophy and religious consciousness decline, the psychoanalyst can easily assume their inheritance and range across fields once well held by those. Psychoanalysis, and particularly Jung's psychology, has trespassed into areas of metaphysics and the science of religions, giving the feeling of insight in it with a concreteness that never before such an assumption had been had; whence the weakened philosophers, the deficient metaphysicians, the abstract historians of religions, and the exanguous theoreticians of all the present systems of knowledge, have finally found a nourishment with which to strengthen and ruminate and give content to their knowledge. Hence we said that these doctrines of the psyche were established with the authority of ancient metaphysics.

If new dogmas, or worse, new idols, were to arise in unsuspected form, in the modern world, with all the trappings of

rationality and the semblances of scientific experience, they undoubtedly came through the doctrine of the unconscious; especially if one considers that this unconscious is conceived as an "outside" of consciousness, totally dominating consciousness and on which consciousness depends without residue, except for the hope borne by Jung of an "individuation" and a stabilisation of conscious being conquerable by man provided he knows the art of opening himself to the "unconscious". Lacking to such a conception the slightest sense of gnoseological criticism, it would seem naive now to ask the assertors of psychoanalysis by what forces consciousness can conceive of an unconscious, which are not forces belonging to consciousness itself. For, either the unconscious is a transcendence, truly conditioning every act of consciousness, and then truly there is little to be done, and along the lines of accepting the ineluctability of instincts and the error of contradicting them, every modern unraveling of the psyche can be justified up to the peaceful criminal unleashing of minors; or it is not a transcendence, but then the whole Freud-Jungian edifice collapses. But it cannot collapse in a world like the present that has lost thinking and cannot discern the primary conscious element in the thinking activity necessary to conceive, for example, of an "unconscious" or preconscious.

Salvation, indeed eventual salvation, according to Jung consists in the possibility of bringing to completion the process of individuation, by means of which finally the conscious being, having disclosed itself to the "unconscious", assumes it in this and puts an end to all the dangers of the dissension that for now travails the whole of humanity and has been travailing it for millennia. So, the discourse, which had begun for neurotics, under the sign of psychiatry, is extended to the whole of humanity as if it were an endemically neurotic species: the

conscious "I" is but an efflorescence of the unconscious, and any activity of this "I," where it wishes to be autonomous, contradicts the unconscious: hence all the ills of the soul and consciousness and their physical consequences.

That being so, even the "I" of the founder of psychoanalysis is necessarily a filiation of the "unconscious": the "unconscious" speaks through Freud, through Jung. Their doctrine is a fully successful maneuvering of the "unconscious". For, in order to give a doctrine of the unconscious, scientifically concrete, it is necessary to place it before oneself as an objective world. But who sets it before him? The inquirer maneuvered by the "unconscious" itself, inevitably: which thus reveals to us that all psychoanalysis is nothing but the "unconscious" penetrated into him and agitating him and dictating his fascinating pages. That, if one were to opine the existence of a conscious principle, with a minimum of autonomy from the "unconscious", the psychoanalytic edifice would collapse. The logic of psychoanalysis, carried to its ultimate consequences, denies the ego, denies an independent principle of consciousness, which has autonomy and is grounded in itself, that is, in its own world, and therefore not in the unconscious. Here we catch the contradiction to which we alluded: a contradiction that cannot fail to suggest something like a mental inadequacy underneath the dazzling and imaginative psychoanalytic conception: especially Jungian. It must be suspected that, in order to prevent the present man from the possibility of defense against neurosis and obsessive anguish, to deprive him of the possibility of recognizing the function of the nervous system in its relations with consciousness, a psychosomatic relation has been put forward as scientific which does not exist because it is conceived on the basis of a supposed dependence of instinctive-emotional life on the nervous system: hence the legitimate persuasion of an

impossibility of real autonomy of consciousness with respect to this life.

In order to be true, the doctrine of the unconscious, to be conceived as a science of the psyche, must be the product of an activity of consciousness, which cannot deny its own reality without collapsing what it asserts. There is no scientist or scholar or inquirer who can speak of anything that is not conscious fact for him.

Even if he speaks of an "outside" of consciousness, or of feelings, or inspirations, or extra-sensible intuitions, or instincts, or impulses, or pre-conscious forms, he can speak of them insofar as at the moment he represents them he experiences them consciously, that is, rationally. There is no extra-rational world that can be represented, described and analyzed, without it becoming rational experience. Let us prescind, for now, from the traditional criticism levelled at psychology, which cannot deal with the phenomena of consciousness, except insofar as it no longer possesses them, insofar as it reenacts them by reducing them to abstract representation; and let us turn our attention toward what is truly the guarantee of all scientific analysis and all substantial knowledge, namely, the reality of the conscious act whose concreteness is have in itself foundation, whereby one thinks trusting to think the true, so that error is always identifiable not insofar as one abolishes thought or consciousness, but insofar as one asks of the same thought a more essential movement: which is is the guarantee of culture and human progress. Whereas psychoanalysis' attack on human consciousness demands, in order to be made, the act of consciousness itself. But it precisely denies the reality of that act, resorting to it for the certainty of the assertion.

It must be deduced from this that one can become a psychoanalyst precisely insofar as of the "unconscious" one does not have the slightest experience, since one is maneuvered by it, and it is it that expresses itself as a conscious principle. A situation which, thought to the end, would lead to the establishment that Freud and Jung, and the latter in particular, were invaded by the unconscious and described in a trance state, or mediumship, something of a world they themselves could not experience: not already that they recalled it while awake, as the one who has dreamed does with the dream, for then they would have contrasted a concrete and lucid state of consciousness with a nebulous and in a sense unreal one: whose nebulosity and unreality, therefore, are evocable through consciousness. It must be said that the unconscious always spoke through them, using their individual element, so that it was inevitable for them to question the consistency of that individual element, even la where they were on the verge of affirming it. And the purpose was precisely this: to destroy the possibility that the psychology of modern man would find the ego, i.e., the subject of every movement of consciousness, the responsible one, the free being because not bound to any unconscious, not dominated by any idol clothed in scientific trappings, the free being and therefore the bearer of the morality: the being that, by its substantial structure, can always overcome anguish and fear.

In truth the ego that was lost in the philosophical realm by abstract thought, whether idealistic or materialistic, annihilated in the psychological realm by the work of Freud and Jung. And because a glimmer toward spirituality and the transcendence of the ego was not in danger of still having it thanks to the stimulus of the oriental doctrines and in particular of Mahayana, and therefore Zen, Jung provided – moved by that highly refined

intelligence in the destruction of the "sacred," with which the unconscious is provided – to bring into the psychological-analytic vision the ultimate meaning of the oriental metaphysics. Its epigones have provided for the rest, and are increasingly methodically providing for it. But they do not know this, because everything is preemptively explained by the psychoanalytic system, even the type of our critical attitude.

What psychoanalysts should think about Zen is suggested by what Jung, commenting on the Tao-te-ching, intuits about the Tao, in his work *The Psychological Types* (Ch. V, 3, d), dealing with "The unifying symbol in Chinese philosophy." He thus expresses himself, "...The original image underlying the concept of Brahman-Atman and the concept of the Tao belongs to all mankind, and is found continuously and everywhere as the concept of primitive energy, as psychic force, or in whatever other way one wishes to designate it." It is evident the confusion Jung makes not only of the "psychic" with the "spiritual," but also of the "psychic" with speculative ego: the psychic unconscious envelops everything, swallows up every other dimension and, once having swallowed it, may well identify itself with the Tao. Then the Tao has redemptive force: "One identifies with the Tao or with the infinite 'creative duration' - as we may say to connect with the most ancient predecessors this most recent philosophical concept (as we can see, the unconscious continues to engulf, this time Bergson) - thus Tao is also the course of time" (*ibid.*). But he is immediately refuted by Lao-tze himself, who says (*Tao-te-ching*, 21), "The Tao is a supra-rational greatness, therefore wholly elusive: inexplicable, incomprehensible, it contains the essence of spirit." It is therefore not the course of time, which is a mental category, but the spirit that also governs, among other

things, the course of time: two quite different things, as we can see.

This set-up of ours is barely a hint of what critically should be said about Jung's intrusion into a doctrinal field that to his means of inquiry appears forbidden. But the unawareness of the limits, the inability of a gnoseological consciousness – which unfortunately has been increasingly rare philosophical asset for some decades now – regarding the very concept of consciousness and its relation to the world of the anima – which not even the distinction between animus and anima can relate to the experience of thought as the original speaker – combined with a special ductility of exposition and a vividness of conceptual connection, as well as a gratuitous but daring systematics, have enabled Jung to enter illegitimately into the field of metaphysics, mysticism and religions of East and West with authority to destroy there the sense of the sacred. Nothing, no one is spared in this sense: not Lao-tze nor Buddha, nor Heraclitus nor Pythagoras, nor Roman tradition nor Christianity: the conversion of St. Paul corresponds to the "acceptance of a hitherto unconscious situation, and the removal (sic!) of an earlier anti-Christian orientation, which later became apparent in his hysterical attacks" (*Ibid.*, definition of "fantasy").

Jung's function in the present world for the purpose of an elimination of the "sacred" casts an alarming light on his psychology and the influences it exerts on contemporary culture. When those who act as "luminaries of science" use their investigation to demolish the spiritual element to which alone the investigation owes its possibility of movement and its magisterium, it is no wonder that the average man, in everything now conditioned by what science prescribes to him, ceases to

consider the hierarchy of inner faculties and the value ethics, and consequently rejects the Divine, brooding a dark and absurd revolt from below toward everything that is elevated, noble and dignified. The fault is not of the culture of this time, but of those who mediate the great obsessive monotheisms, with which it, inasmuch as it is no longer succored by the spirit, is being nourished,

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Now is a century the idea of the unconscious has appeared in Western philosophy through three thinkers, Schopenhauer, Carus and von Hartmann. It is not wrong to see in these speculative assumptions of the unconscious the filiation of *caput mortuum* left outside the possibility of knowing and limiting human thought, by Emanuel Kant, with his "thing in this" inaccessible to human consciousness and yet real: conceived solely through thought and yet seen as impenetrable to thought. Schopenhauer's will, [^]unconsciousness Carl Gustav Carus and Eduard von Hartmann are mental presuppositions, that is, acts of philosophical consciousness that limits itself and, beyond the limit, glimpses a "psychic" or "extra-rational" world. But of this it cannot see except what can be conscious to it, whereby each time the notion of the unconscious is eliminated by the fact that, in order to say anything about it, it must cease to be unconscious: so that in reality it is never there, and yet it is each time supposed, by means of a thought that in order to be there, it must be conscious thought. Discourse that would lead to severe conclusions regarding these perpetrators of human knowing, who have in the beginning renounced the true investigation of consciousness, projecting out of it what they have been unable to grasp in themselves.

In effect from a weakened philosophical consciousness, in the naively and confusingly treated theme of the unconscious, is could resurface dogmatism and revive the corpse of ancient metaphysics (not metaphysics). Out of the gnoseological impotence of Western speculation arose the possibility that the subject of the unconscious would be taken over exclusively by psychotherapy and psychology, and at a given moment, Sigmund Freud reversed the relationship: no longer did philosophy illuminate from above the investigation of the unconscious to psychology, but rather psychology with authority took the reins of research and drew conclusions not only for itself, but also for philosophy, and even for religion. Then came Jung who extended this authority suggestive of their ultimate meanings to mysticisms, traditions, and all metaphysics. The problem of the soul, closed and forever extraneous to philosophical dialecticism, became the field of research of an even less provided dialecticism, but provided with scientific language and metaphysical presumption, despite its metaphysical incapability and its impossibility to conceive that into the soul one must enter with essential forces of the soul and not with psychoanalytic glossolalia. The decisive blows to the possibility that machine civilization connected with the forces of a higher direction of the world, they were thus deadly inflicted.

What, then, does Zen have to do with psychoanalysis? Nothing, unless it is a Zen nominalism, needing to recognize itself in the manifestations of unconscious panpsychism, insofar as it is compelled to find in it a content that it has not been able to accommodate from the metaphysics of which it presents itself as discourse: that as mere discourse it should never be made, according to which Hui-neng admonishes. If Zen I, on the other hand, is still the echo of Mahayanic-Taoist wisdom and at least as

an echo intends to continue to hold true to its original being, then no identification with a merely dialectical system can be granted, which does not turn out to be a science of the psyche, but the psychology of fallen man, or of man who poses the problem of consciousness while ignoring its foundation, so that the responsibility of being conscious of self will be permanently lost in the individual.

Just as a building cannot be erected without a foundation, so one cannot build consciousness by beginning by taking away the virtue of its principle, that is, the possibility of being itself. Only a crystal-clear consciousness can know the limits it must gradually overcome in itself in order to ascend to broader expressions of what is in essence: therefore beyond the psychic limit it enacts a spiritual life, which is not the Unconscious, but exactly the opposite, that which does not allow itself to be grasped by the Unconscious. Jung himself admits that he has no metaphysical vocation, but nevertheless he acts as if he did: therefore he fails to be aware of the fact that his system, his psychotherapy, confession, interpretation dreams and symbols, are in essence an activity of representing that he uses without possessing, that is, without knowing the laws of thought.

If everything is represent, even the dialogue with the patient, art should be about possessing the substance of that representing, to enter its circuit of forces: which Jung uses formally, but which as a system of forces is hopelessly foreign to him. Only if he could grasp it as a force system, he could say that he enters some zone of the soul and understand Taoist metaphysics, certainly not as a form of the Collective Unconscious. But in that case he would have to open himself to a different perception of the psyche: the one he has instead carefully worked to get out of the way: the

sense of the sacred being of the human soul. Such a sense should not be lacking in anyone who presumes to intervene as a therapist in the facts of another's consciousness. Jung shows that he does not possess the inner means to understand the metaphysical element and yet his investigation involves metaphysical world, mystical and religious world, mythical and dream world, forcing them within the empirical-psychological limit, without knowing it, without being aware of it. The dogmatic-metaphysical assumption is unconscious, uses the consciousness of. Jung, who thus acknowledges to himself the mission of denying self-foundation to consciousness. Unconsciousness really played Jung and continues to play all those entangled in his doctrine, as in its scientific and cultural consequences.

We thus believe to have shown how the hypothesis of the unconscious psychic evil becoming an idea, according to the right insight had by Pierre Janet-before Freud-about hysteria and subconscious fixed ideas, is to be kept in mind regarding Jung's unconscious panpsychism. Other is the idea of the unconscious as an act of thought that responds to a perception or objectively follows and intends it other is the unconscious which by authority becomes itself an idea. The relation is reversed: perception grasps the idea and subordinates it to this.

Man's essential art is to transform sensation into thought: it can be said that this faculty summarizes man's mission, because every error is always the sensation that invades possessing consciousness, and can possess it in a legitimate form if it takes on the guise of thought. The fixed idea can dress itself in logic and cultural value, until it becomes a universalism in itself articulated and dialectically in rule. By this is not demonstrated the univocal power of the Unconscious as Freud and Jung want,

but the power of the Unconscious in the weakened man, in whom the function of the ego has weakened, as Janet intuited. A serious hypothesis that one cannot fail to feel the responsibility to enunciate in the face of the current debacle of the human psyche and the abdication of thought regarding an obscure idea that has arisen empirically and abstractly o as a non-being of the cognitive act, committed nevertheless to knowing a subject accepted as real insofar as it is unknowable: the Unconscious. Hence, the Unconscious is the object, but simultaneously cannot be, by its very dialectic, rather it ends up becoming the subject. But this becoming subject is the taking the place of the ego: of Freud, of Jung, in the well-known form: according to an impulse opposite to that leads to metaphysics, to the Tao, to Zen.

VI

Zen, Idealism, "Contestation"

Up to now, Western presenters of Zen have not been philosophers, but, if one excludes Orientalists, it must be said that rather the world of psycho-analysts has turned its scientific attention to it. In particular, psychoanalysis has attempted to make Zen its own, assuming this is possible. In a previous article (1) we have shown how even in theory such an inclusion is illegitimate, and when it has been attempted doctrinally, it has been at the expense of a number of paralogistic positions, and especially of the misunderstanding about the assumption of the "unconscious" as "universal" beyond la of consciousness, never really perceived or experienced, and yet given as the result of experience. But which of such scholars can claim to have ever accomplished it? Such a "universal" has been so possessed in its mere nominalism by psychoanalytic literature, that it has been possible to presume a relationship and somehow an identity of such a "universal" with that which is at the heart of Zen doctrines: prajna, the tao, the nonmental, the wage. It is sometimes established that the nonmental equation = non-conscious, that is, tao = Unconscious. An unserious thing, probably fostered by the fact that some Zen expositors, such as Suzuki or Ch. Luk, have in good faith believed that the unconscious was, at least for its top European-American

1. "Zen and psychoanalysis," *in Japan*, V, 1965, pp. 145-160.

scholars, an experience consequent on a meditative state.

Of this from reflected consciousness, the non-mental of Zen is simultaneously the immediate real: there is no Taoist text, or traditional meditative technique, that does not allude to it by prospecting it as absolute immanence. Dialogues, stories, aphorisms, all revolve around the theme of the meditator's initiative, of his or her fundamentality as the subject of experience, of his or her possibility of slow gradual elimination of all transcendence, until abrupt identity with it. There is an embarrassment of riches in wanting to exemplify the case in which a disciple is sarcastically or good-naturedly or enigmatically admonished to rid himself of the last bonds of maya, which prevent him from identity with the Absolute. There is even the famous episode of a brief wisdom duel between two masters: mutually, with back-and-forth, each discovers in the other a residue of dualism.

The "otherness" that the Western philosopher exorcises, denies, or reifies, or consecrates, for the Zen disciple is the sign of his subjection to the dualistic view and therefore to the *maya* – it is not the objectivity of the world that is unreal, but rather the state of mind whereby that is undergone as thought of objectivity, but being assumed as separation instead begins to be united again by the fact that it arises in thought: whereby the Dao is not realized, but veiled. The veil is the thought, the mental: the veil that needs to be removed. In a nutshell, it can be said that the doctrine is this. But there is no one who does not see that la from the arbitrariness of psychoanalysis, if there is a doctrine that theoretically has in itself the noetic presuppositions of Zen, this European idealism, particularly logical idealism (Hegel) and actualistic idealism (Gentile).

We say Hegel and not Fichte nor Schelling for a reason that was initially understood by Feuerbach when, in his first essay critiquing Hegelism (which can be said to mark the beginning of the life of the Hegelian left) he asserted that, while the Schellingian philosophical tradition is "an oriental type of speculation, an uncritical and absolute identification of the infinite and the finite," "the characteristic of Hegelian speculative philosophy is instead entirely Western in that it is based on difference" (the italics of the two attributes are ours).

Feuerbach is right: the logic of the concept is a typically Western event, in relation to which the positions of Fichte and Schelling can typologically be considered oriental. But precisely because typically Western, Hegelian speculation can be considered akin to Zen. It would seem contradictory to say that Hegel is closer to Zen than Fichte and Schelling, but in effect it is so, for the reason that in these two philosophers there remain unnoticed mystical residues, whereas in Hegel all of nature is resolved in the activity of spirit, at least theoretically. This was intuited by Nishida Kitaro who advised his disciples, who were friends of Zen, to meditate on Hegel's Science of Logic, so that they would purify their thinking from dialecticism, so that dialectic would be reabsorbed into its source and would not be an obstacle to dhyanical discipline. Nishida Kitaro knew that reflex or rational thought fallen thought and that in the modern world this fallen state thought has come to codify itself not only with scientific and technological production, but also with philosophical production: therefore he referred back to certain themes of Hegelism, such as the identity of being and nothingness and the dialectic of Ferreaza.

To the noble Japanese thinker is was possible an understanding of Hegel, to which they did not reach the very disciples who were around him: understanding due to the exercise of dhyana, in deference to the principle that one cannot follow the life of thought without experiencing in oneself a meta-dialectical source. The precisely non-mental origin. It is precisely on the basis of such a position, which is fundamentally Zen, that a critique of idealism itself, from Berkeley to Hegel to Gentile, including ontological and phenomenological idealism, is possible. In fact, once it is admitted that all knowing and experiencing is reducible to the knowing and experiencing subject, such a starting point-which from Zen is used practically as a discipline of the pure subject-in idealism gives rise to a philosophizing that proclaims as the center of the human and extrahuman universe this simply logical or dialectical subject: a subject that remains what it is in its puny existentiality with all its limitations and presumptions and yet stands as the ruler of creation. Not that it is not potentially so, but other is the power, other is the act: Zen teaches that a method, an effort, a discipline, lead to the realization of that which of the essential ego is contradicted by its contingent presence and the dullness of intellectualism.

It was this absence of praxis that at a given moment motivated, mainly as a need for reconnection with the concreteness of the sensible world, the deviation to which is related the birth of the so-called "Hegelian Left": it was in essence a gradual and irresistible, though respectful, contestation of the metaphysical aspect of the master's doctrine. It is useful to quote a passage from L. D. Trotsky, which sums up the situation limpidly: "Thanks to the mighty impetus given to thought by the French Revolution, Hegel anticipated the general movement of science. But precisely because yes it was only a matter of an

anticipation, even if by a genius, Hegel gave it an idealistic character. Hegel operated with ideological shadows as if they were the ultimate reality. Marx demonstrated that the movement of these ideological shadows merely reflected the movement of material bodies" (From In Defense of Marxism, in Scelta di Scritti 1905-1940, transl. L. Maitan, Samona and Savelli, 1968). The synthesis of this foundational position of dialectical materialism is important, because it leaves open way for the hypothesis that the Marxian doctrinal construction was possible because of the fact that at a certain moment to human thought is failed experience the metadialectical zone of the thinking process. Here it is graspable what Zen can mean to concrete Western thought: a motive more radical than that aroused in Eastern thought itself.

To have constructed the dialectical cosmos without offering a practical starting point for the metadialectical experience of thought has been fatal to Hegelism. This was not without consequences over time, but even on the current offspring of the "Hegelian left," such as Adorno (certainly the most independent of the so-called "Frankfurt School"), Horkheimer, Marcuse, Habermas, etc. One could also include Lukacs, Korsch and several others who, despite their Marxism, reveal a poignant nostalgia for Hegel. The fact is that contestation, because of the vice of origin mentioned, remains a sterile philosophical exercise, despite the practical consequences it seems to have: which in their brute factuality have nothing to do with the theoretical to which they appeal. Such theory is merely justificatory. There is no relation between theory and praxis, between rhetorically revolutionary thought and revolutionary action: the most valuable link in the chain has been lost, the one alluded to then who remembered the relationship of a modern Japanese

philosopher, Nishida Kitaro, to Hegelism. A Zen disciple and instructor, Nishida had found in dialectics the link between the non-mental and praxis. The mental was, in a pragmatic sense, the presupposed mediator: inner action, dhyana and dharana, on the other hand, was the direct, or more immediate, praxis for metadialectical being, that is, for I" being."

What we are considering tends above all note how Western philosophical thought has lacked an awareness of the pragmatic element inherent in the experience of pure thought, as in Zen meditation. The dimension lacking in this culture, whose highest culmination even today is left-wing Hegelianism, renewed, contested, in a political and critical sense, is precisely the metadialectic praxis of thought. Therefore none of the contestations can land on anything. Almost all European-American thinkers of this time have their accusation, or their contestation to make to the modern world, in the name of their specific mental position. It would be interesting to determine how many of them would be unhappy if the present world were different from what it is. The suspicion that many of them, in spite of their discouragement and pessimism, are rather justified in this modern world.

From the texts of Mahayana to the discipline of zazen, reflex judgment is considered the meditator's ultimate impediment: the most difficult to overcome. Actually, an intellectual accusation, precisely as an expression of a certain level intellect, is nothing, has no real life, has nothing to really oppose or contribute to this accused civilization. It is only a mental position: of the modern mental, which among other things jumps to take it against itself. But ultimately it is always he, something like a secretion of the very evil to which he alludes and which he does not show that he

really understands, if finally the remedy he proposes is, for example, violent action.

Sticking as to a measure to the concept of prajna, as to the dimension that Western thought is lacks, one can admit that present human experience has a right to be said to be true, objectively certain, only on the plane of scientific-mathematical research. It must be recognized that where one weighs, measures and constructs mechanically, one moves objectively, with clarity, at least in logical form. But reality is not only measurement, number, weight: indeed one can say that the real begins la where, by going beyond measurements, one is able to grasp what they are a sign of. Consideration this so simple as to seem pedestrian: yet such, that one is no longer is capable doing it. The experience of knowing is distorted by the fact that one identifies the real with the measurable. For example, one measures the firmament, traverses it spatially and believes one has penetrated it, while one is still unable to penetrate into the mystery of the life of a blade of grass.

What according to Zen doctrines is the essence of thought (bua tu), is presupposed by inquiry, but ignored. In effect, the world of the immisurable, or of the soul, or of quality is not denied: on the contrary, it is often held to show that such a world has decisive function and that quite another domain is that of agnosticism or materialism. The evil is that by turning to the world of the soul or the supersensible, one presumes to grasp it by the same yardstick by which one grasps the world of measurable quantities. One does not suspect that Io same sensible world, with elided into physicochemical, logical and technical categories, and abstract.

Disanimated abstraction is that which, assuming the simply measured exteriority, treats it as a concreteness: it calls it reality and prospects it as possessing it. By this one can say that the sensible world itself remains foreign to the inquirer. The misunderstanding is aggravated when an inner, living dimension is presumed to be regained, as if it were to be sought by means of a further development of the inquiry addressed to this sensible world, that is, by still proceeding in the direction of the abstractness with which it was assumed.

In short, one dreams, for example, that by taking nuclear research to its extreme developments, one arrives at the: one does not even assume that the direction towards the supersensible is exactly the opposite, for the simple fact that every perception and therefore every sensation is reversed by means of a motion of consciousness that experience the external datum continuously leading it back to itself according to a direction opposite to that of its giving. The nuclear experiment, taking to the limit of sensible perceiving, is what, from the point of view of an absolute search, or a search according to the spirit, would demand the maximum opposition of thought, that is, to put it Hegelianly, the maximum possibility of negation of negation in the cognitive act: one might say the maximum inner presence, or the possibility of empty consciousness (*shūnyata*) as before the more hermetic *kóan*. Instead, on the contrary, a true metaphysical dignification, albeit in logical-scientific terms, of the physical datum is implemented. The cognitive act, deprived of its legitimate integration, remains something seriously one-sided, since the nuclear phenomenon is there, but there is no thought capable of assuming it: no awareness arises from its inner counterpart. No one would dream of searching inside the mirror for the mirrored object: yet those who believe they are arriving at the spirit

through nuclear experiencing behave in this way. He behaves as if the subject of physical experiencing, which is precisely the spirit, does not exist. He behaves as if he, as the subject of the process, does not exist. Such a situation is common to the various systems of science today, despite the logical-mathematical procedure that their investigation avails itself of.

The present would like to be the age of limpid rationalism, of mathematics, of exactitude. The reality is that this civilization lacks what it presumes above all to have logic, which cannot be simply the "formal" logic. As is pointed out by Zen masters, the state of shūnya sums up and resolves in itself all human logic: real and formal. The logic of satori is not a dialectical structure, but a pure intemporal being. Post-Hegelians were no longer able to understand what Hegel wanted to understand as pure being, or as the identity of being and thinking. So today logic is there, but quantumly: an atomistic logic, devoid of "immanent deduction," exact, analytical, but insufficient to concrete existence. A technician, a rationalist or an intellectual of this time, has his logical zone in a certain daily endeavor, but between this and the rest of his life, that is, the other zones endowed with their own logic, there is no relationship. So in the world of culture, so on the social and political level.

What could come as a gift from the wisdom of the Far East did not have in the West the thinking capable of thinking it. Zen is was itself culturized and dialecticized. Western thought, bound to the sensible, has lost the inner dimension, the bua you. The series of everyday sensations enslaves the mental of today's man up to speculative operations. For sensation to be the individual's experience, he must have it, not be had by it. The accumulation of sensations in the psyche more than it has capacity to process,

eliminates the human subject. one time man had the possibility of opposing the world of sensations with an ethical-religious element, which no longer succors him. What is needed is a science of the inner man, before an accommodation of externalistic and technical knowledge. It is necessary to understand how every perception demands from man inner activity that corresponds to the giving of it, before the use he intends to make of it or the sensation he wishes to enjoy.

Knowledge of Zen should not be for the Westerner a compensation to the automated mental, but the stimulus to a penetration of the metadialectic moment of his rational process: an intuitive moment by which the spirit becomes self-aware in its relation to the physical world, translating into capacity for exact inquiry its movement, but simultaneously into a possibility unknown to the ancient world, to the "tradition" and therefore to the East: that of grasping the movement extrinsic in inquiry. This possibility, decisive for civilization, was not implemented. Investigation has bound itself to the phenomenon: it has resulted in the positive experience of the physical world, which is undoubtedly the sign of a peculiar force, but of a force that remains unknown to the rationalist, pragmatist or technologist. Of this force the West should assume awareness, for in that sense it is necessary to the world and therefore also to the East. But awareness is not philosophy of science, but inner act, like Zen or Yoga. Every perception is given solely by a motion of consciousness responding to an external stimulus. Such motion demands not to be excluded by man when he continues the experience, because only it can suggest the further behavior of him in relation to the phenomenon. Of course, on the other hand, the phenomenon, insofar as it occurred, grasps man, becomes more important than the inner act that gave a way to

penetrate it. Man caught up in the phenomenon, continually needing the phenomenon in order to have thoughts, deifying the phenomenon and unable to recognize what he puts into it, therefore unable to control the ultimate meaning of the phenomenon, cannot have moral relationship with what he produces as culture and technological civilization.

Neither Zen, nor Yoga, nor any other Eastern discipline could have led the spirit of man to the physical investigation of nature and scientific- technical experience. If you look at China today, there is no greatness it boasts, industrial-mechanical or ideological-political, that does not belong to the West. This means that within Western materialism flows a force that has yet to be identified-a force that co-science does not yet have as its own content. The inner activity of man in devoting himself to physical investigation has attained a state of lucidity or wakefulness, of conscious exactness, which leaves in a state dream, or unconsciousness, the inner movement from which it derives: a vital movement which he should instead consciously draw upon at least through a minimum number of researchers, in order to have the content of force as a virtue of orientation with regard to the phenomenon investigated and the law ascertained. The modern scientist every time should realize the inner forces brought into play in penetrating the phenomenon, but not known, only the phenomenon being known.

To the right use of the phenomenon would have been logically necessary not the thought bound to it, but the original thought active in it: original, but not possessed as such. La where the function of this original thought is impeded, there acts a thought that comes not from the spirit, but from forces adverse to it. it is not only the situation of the scientist, but indistinctly of

all those who belong to the present civilization : sensory perception possible only by means of activity of the spirit, excludes the spirit every time. Such contradiction is becoming every day the regular evil of man : of soul and body. It cannot not be the way to the methodical destruction of the psyche. The danger is not a policy, or a cultural orientation or a social current or anything else, the danger is the fact that man's imbalance mobilizes more and more essential forces of rationality to constitute his own normalcy.

If Zen indeed has not met West, the West has failed to become aware of the force-thinking with which it built technological civilization. Contestation is the ultimate cone of a leftist idealism lacking the bite of inner praxis to which Hegelism owes the positive element its structure. Zen stands as a reminder of the inner reviving technique of the metadialectic consciousness of similar praxis, the meaning of which is a transcendence that to the East ceases to be necessary, or ceases to have meaning, while it acquires its original meaning for ii Western thought, as inner activity alienated in absolute outer formalism. It is difficult to grasp the treatment of such alienation, when it is reified and projected into representations of social situations, or when it is translated into further dialectical position, i.e., further product of alienation.